

THE AMERICAN I M A G O

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*A Psychoanalytic Journal
for the Arts and Sciences*

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Psychology of Music and Musicians: Two Clinical Examples

by

Theodore G. Brannman M.D.

"If Music be the food of love . . ."

Twelfth Night

In a long series of papers and in several books, (1) Edmund Bergler has offered, together with supporting clinical evidence, a theory of the psychology of the creative process. The bulk of his data relates to writers and literary productions; little is adduced specifically pertaining to music and musicians. This paper will attempt to begin to fill this gap in our scientific literature.

According to Bergler's thesis there are two main tributaries to all creative process: — 1. an autarchic defense within the framework of oral regression (with the artist playing both role of mother and child in mechanism of positive magic gesture); and 2. sublimatory transformations of original infantile voyeuristic impulses. The material of this paper will relate to the autarchic defense element in the psychology of music and musicians; scopophilic conflicts play an important role but will not be considered in any detail in this particular paper. In his studies on writers, Bergler has shown how the creative individual works toward a partly successful solution of an oral masochistic conflict by symbolically 'feeding' himself beautiful words. Schematically, one may delineate the five layer structure as follows:—

1. Unconscious masochistic wish to be starved by 'bad' (pre-oedipal) mother figure;
2. Superego objection to libidinal (unconscious pleasure) element in repressed masochistic wish;
3. Primary ego defense of retaliatory anger (pseudo-aggression) directed against mother or mother substitute;

4. Superego objection to defense layer of 'murderous rage';
5. Secondary defense layer of creative process, meaning — "I neither want to be refused (starved) by bad mother; nor do I want to retaliate vengefully against the bad mother; I am simply being nice to myself and give to myself — words (symbolically: food)." Via this autarchic position, the artist denies the very existence of the 'bad' pre-oedipal mother and with this the masochistic and pseudo-aggressive attachments to the figure.

With 'beautiful sounds' replacing 'beautiful words', the psychic structure of the autarchic defense in musicians is essentially the same as in writers; as we shall see in the clinical material to follow.

Miss A. was a young, talented musician who had appeared on occasion with symphony orchestras. She had entered analysis with complaints of depression with uncontrollable crying, fears of travelling and of being on the street, and in addition a wide variety of psychosomatic gastro-intestinal symptoms. In this paper the patient's symptoms are not of primary concern although her crying as a species of autarchic defense ('I give myself'—tears, fluid) deserves a second glance. Early in her analysis, the patient brought in the following dream and associative material, the analysis of which provides, in my opinion, a clinical paradigm for the psychology of music and musicians.

Dream: "I am in an elevator with Uncle X. It seems I have just been snubbed by M. M. Then I look down at my music which I had been carrying under my arm, and see written across the top sheet the word — 'Carnation'."

Associations:— The patient spoke at some length about a visit with the uncle referred to in the dream; the outstanding detail being that the visit was the most recent and prolonged (a matter of weeks) separation from her mother; that it was occasioned by the mother's taking a vacation. From this the patient went on to relate that during the evening just before the dream, her mother spoke of going away for a vacation. The patient then said, "I became very angry when my mother spoke about going away. I knew being

furious didn't make any sense, but that was just the way I felt and I let her know it too. I put it all on to who would take care of my kid sister. Actually we're both old enough to get supper for ourselves; yet it seemed last night as though my mother was being cruel in speaking of leaving even for just a little while. Almost as though we'd starve. Later on we watched television and I guess that's where I got that word in the dream — we saw the *Carnation Milk* hour."

The M. M. referred to in the dream led to a brief but crucial association very much in line with the above material, — namely, that "M stands for mother".

Analysis:— The most immediately apparent element in the dream and the associative material is the positive oedipal layer as expressed (symbolically) via the dream detail 'riding in the elevator with Uncle X.' This alone would not contribute however, toward clarification of the role of 'music', or of 'Carnation' in the manifest dream; nor of the superabundant day residue material pointing in the direction of oral deprivation fantasies. These elements relate to pre-oedipally derived conflicts and are explicable, in my opinion, as follows:— 1. repressed masochistic impulse expressed via unconscious wish to be starved by the 'bad' mother in the dream, associative material, and day residue material pertaining to 'mother leaves child unfed'. 2. Superego objection to unconscious libidinization of starvation fantasy — surface reverberations seen in patient's questioning of her own reaction to mother's speaking of going on vacation. 3. Primary defense layer — pseudoaggressive attack on mother — seen in patient's fury during the evening of the dream. 4. Superego objection to defense layer of pseudo-aggression — again reverberations of this layer seen in patient's questioning the rationality of her anger against mother. 5. Secondary defense layer — autarchic fantasy; positive magic gesture with patient playing both the role of 'giving mother' and 'receiving child'. This is contained (in condensed form) in the symbolic dream detail — 'Carnation' — equating in dream language, the pa-

tient's *music* with her food (*milk*).

This secondary defense equation is precisely what Bergler was the first to describe pertaining to the psychology of all creative process. In this secondary defense, the argument of the unconscious ego runs as follows:— "I neither want, masochistically, to be refused by mother; nor do I want to attack her in revenge; she doesn't even exist; I take care of myself and feed myself my own music (*milk*)."

When the dream was interpreted to the patient, her response was rather interesting. She related how on two occasions the previous night, her mother had offered her 1. a glass of milk and 2. some candy; that in both instances the patient refused, *only to take by herself* about 20-30 minutes later both milk and the candy. She emphasized that there was no noticeable difference in appetite between the two occasions. Thus, this autarchic behavior ('I give to myself') as reported by the patient following interpretation of the dream, is final confirmation of the analysis of the deeper, pre-oedipal layers.

Mr. B. was a professional singer, in analysis primarily because of marital conflicts. During his analysis he expressed certain ideas about coitus and its relationship to his work that were somewhat unusual outside of primitive folklore. It was his rather vehement belief that coitus performed the night prior to his singing took "body" away from his vocalizing. We can recognize contained in this belief, the not uncommon fear of being 'drained' attached to the seminal ejaculation. Bergler has written extensively about this fear especially in relation to various forms of impotence. (2)

What is instructive about the particular example cited here, is the unmistakable unconscious connection between an unconscious *fear of being drained sexually* and an unconscious *fear of being drained vocally (music)*. For Mr. B., semen was unconsciously equated with vital energy supplies ("body"), i.e. food and nutriment. This connection between semen and food (milk) in the unconscious has been long established in the analytic literature. The parallel equa-

tion of vocalizing (voice, musical productions) with food (vital supplies) is shown in this particular clinical instance.

As in the first case cited, Miss A., so for Mr. B. did music represent (in part) an autarchic defense along the lines of "I give to myself beautiful sounds (milk)". Thus, for this masochistic patient — who felt his inner source of supplies to be seriously depleted by normal sexual ejaculation — to be called upon to sing (to give food) following coitus was to be caught with 'cupboard bare'.

In the two cases cited in this paper as well as in two other musician patients analyzed, there were certain common traits. All four musician patients had the problem of controlling obesity (oral regression); all had tendency toward logorrhea (oral regression); all had exhibitionistic tendencies close to or on the psychic surface (repressed conflictual voyeurism); all, characterologically were 'injustice-collectors' (oral regression). (3)

Finally, one must emphasize that while the general and common psychic defenses existed as described above, there were, naturally, individual specific unconscious connections for each person which only a thoroughgoing psychoanalysis can delineate, the various details of which are not germane to this communication.

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Psychology Of "Perfectionism"

by

Theodore Branfman,* M.D. and Edmund Bergler, M.D.

The desire for perfection is the worst disease that ever afflicted the human mind.

Marquis Louis Fontanes (1757-1821) to Napoleon 1 in 1804.

Perfection does not exist. To understand it is the triumph of human intelligence; the desire to possess it is the most dangerous kind of madness.

Alfred de Musset (1810-1857).

I. *Pre-analytic Opinions*

Pre-analytic opinions on perfectionism, as recorded by poets, philosophers and "sages," approach the problem with scorn or irony. The consensus seems to be that perfection does not exist; people who try to approach perfection are either naive innocents or dangerous fanatics. Musset, in the lines quoted above, spoke of "madness"; Fontanes of "disease." Less extreme judgments stress the hopelessness of achieving perfection, as in Alexander Pope's couplet:

Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.

This is merely a repetition of Shakespeare's theme in THE RAPE OF LUCRECE:

No perfection is so absolute
That some impurity does not pollute.

In SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER, Oliver Goldsmith spoke ironically of "the very pink of perfection" but there are also some opinions on record which either approve the impossible, or at least defends it as a "seed" cherished within the "cen-

tral heart." Robert Herrick and Walt Whitman, as disparate in personality as they are separated in time, agree on this point:

Julia, if I chance to die
Ere I print my poetry,
I must humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 'twere my book were dead
Than to live not perfected. (HESPERIDES, 1648.)

Whitman approves and adds a generalization:

In this broad earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within the central heart,
Nestles the seed perfection. (SONG OF THE UNIVERSAL,
1881.)

Sometimes the gentlemen of earlier generations applied the demand for perfection to women; gallant but slightly resigned they would conclude, with Victor Hugo: "There are most lovely women, but no perfect ones." Alexander Pope was less gallant in JANUARY AND MAY:

'Tis true, perfection none must hope to find
In all the world, much less in womankind.

A cynical woman, Ninon de l'Enclos, was even more direct: "There are no perfect women in the world; only hypocrites exhibit no defects."

The theme of perfection as a dead end has by no means been overlooked. In OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE (1842), Robert Browning declared: "What's come to per-

*Dr. Bergler's comment: The ideas presented in this paper were originally discussed by both authors in a tragic situation: Dr. Branfman was dying and knew it. During one of my visits to him a few weeks before his death this brilliant young scientist put forward his opinions on scientific problems with clarity, precision and true originality. The basic idea expressed in this paper — the application of oral-masochistic explanations to perfection — is Dr. Branfman's. I only enlarged and elaborated on the sketchy notes presented to me by Mrs. Branfman after her husband's death; he died on Christmas Day, 1954.

fection, perishes." The more skeptical Josh Billings quipped: "If a man should happen to reach perfection in this world, he would have to die immediately to enjoy himself."

Omitting a few rare optimistic opinions hinting at self-improvement, wisdom's last word on the matter seems to be Bayard Taylor's melancholy dictum: "The maxims tell you to aim at perfection, which is well; but it's unattainable, all the same." At the same time, aiming at perfection is recommended as propelling factor: "The indefatigable pursuit of an unattainable perfection, even if it consists of nothing more than in the pounding of an old piano, is what alone gives meaning to our life on this unavailing star." (Logan Pearsall Smith.)

II. *Analytic Opinions*

Freud's, Jones' and Abraham's basic studies on obsessional neurosis made it clear that certain types of perfectionism are by no means the sheer foolishness that pre-analytic observers generally assumed them to be, but are instead part of the elaboration of obsessional doubts and ambivalence; in later stages the whole personality may be imbued with obsessive-compulsive rigidity of character.

By and large, this is the only connection in which the problem of perfectionism is mentioned in subsequent analytic literature; in some writings on compulsives it is not mentioned at all. The "anal-sadistic" substratum has never been questioned in these studies.

In 1942 one of the authors of this paper (Bergler) published a study entitled "Two Forms of Aggression in Obsessional Neurosis (*The Psychoanalytic Review*, 29:2, 188-196) in which the term "pseudo-aggression" was suggested. The term was explained as secondary defense against a more deeply repressed passive conflict. These ideas were enlarged in 1948 in the study "Three Tributaries to the Development of Ambivalence (*The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 17:2, 173-181), where the thesis was presented that the oral precursors are indispensable for understanding the structure of anal regression. The entire problem was subsequently summarized

in THE BASIC NEUROSIS (1949) and THE SUPEREGO (1952).

Whether or not even obsessional-compulsive "perfectionists" — insofar as they torture others — are using real aggression is dubious. It is more likely that the "material" is but *pseudo-aggression*.

III. *Additional Uses of the Unconscious Defense Mechanism "Perfectionism"*

Perfectionism is not the exclusive prerogative of obsessive-compulsive people. One can suspect that orally regressed neurotics contribute most extensively to the ranks of perfectionists.

First, a distinction must be made between "perfectionists" who expect their own performances to achieve a fantastically high level, and those whose equally unrealistic expectations are shifted to the performances of others.

a.) Expressed in popular terms, one can state that the perfectionist expects "too much" of life and of people, including himself. If this is taken as a phenomenological observation, there is little to be added, but as a genetic explanation it is pitifully naive. The no-longer-young bachelor who still has not found the "perfect" girl is certainly expecting "too much." The young woman with only X dollars at her disposal who is forever eyeing the mink coat or the house that can be obtained only for X dollars plus (the plus being unattainable) could with some validity be described as wanting "too much."

The problem hinges on understanding that in orally regressed neurotics the "*wish to get*" is but the defensive cover for the "*wish to be refused*." In early childhood, the "gimme" attitude was real enough. This *historical-genetic* factor in the individual's development does not tally with the *clinical* facts visible in adult neurotics. In the course of further development, a masochistic elaboration has taken place, and because the inner conscience (superego) objects to this elaboration a new defense has been instituted: "It is not true that I want to be refused; I want to get."

What is frequently designated as "oral dependence"

in *adult* neurotics represents a rather tragic confusion on the part of the analyst (tragic for the patient) between the genetic and clinical pictures of oral-masochistic regression, as elaborated at length in *THE BASIC NEUROSIS*.

In a series of patients, both authors have observed that the desire for perfection in others is but a masochistic cloak for not wishing to get in the first place. Perfectionism is a better rationalization than acceptance of psychic masochism, unconscious to boot.

b.) In "Transference and Love" (*Imago*, 1934 and *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1949), Jekels and Bergler described the structure of the superego as consisting of two constituents: ego ideal and "daimonion." The ego ideal, as originally postulated by Freud, consists of the child's indestructible narcissism plus the introjected images of the educators (as seen through the child's projections). This ego ideal also contains all the high-pitched expectations of the child concerning his grandiose future. The daimonion sector of the superego (accumulation of the child's undischARGEABLE aggression) misuses the ego ideal for its own unsavory purposes of torture. By quoting the ego ideal's unachievable expectations, and contrasting them with the actual achievements of the adult, the discrepancy — who ever achieved everything he promised himself as a child? — is felt in guilt, dissatisfaction, depression.

Perfectionism conveniently enters at this point. On the one hand, it corresponds to one of daimonion's tortures; on the other hand, it *also constitutes the defense put forward by the unconscious ego*: "I'm still looking for the perfect. I can do no more!" This "I can do no more" is also an ironic repartee on the part of the ego; it amounts to an innuendo of "pseudo-moral connotation." (For elaboration, see *THE SUPEREGO*.)

c.) In some cases, perfectionism pertains to *shifted guilt*. This is especially observable in artists, for example, in writers who seek for stylistic perfection. In a study entitled "Myth, Merit and Mirage of Literary Style" (*The American Imago*, 7:3, 279-287, 1950), one of the present authors (Berg-

ler) drew attention to this fact:

"It is phenomenologically a well-known fact that every writer creates his private hell plastered with 'perfect words.' The search for the latter seems of prime importance. Viewed analytically, the writer's overestimation of stylistic and verbal artistry is but a byproduct in his lifelong 'battle of the conscience,' elaborated at length in my book, *THE WRITER AND PSYCHOANALYSIS*. Infinite care in finding the 'right' word, and a constant feeling of guilt because he has not succeeded in 'perfectly' expressing the inexpressible, are as characteristic of the writer as exaggerated pride in, and boasting about, precisely these achievements. At bottom, an unconscious mechanism of shifted guilt is at work: guilt pertaining to the defense of the repressed masochistic problem is shifted to the technicality of expressing the defense. In this shift, the inner problem is magnificently camouflaged, and even more magnificently rationalized — who can object to verbal artistry? Mark Twain's dictum, 'The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug,' proves to what degree the writer magnifies the importance of the shifted defense." (p. 282)

d.) In other cases, perfectionism denotes a "negative magic gesture." As worked out in previous writings of one of the authors (Bergler; summarized in *THE BASIC NEUROSIS*), this type of defense constitutes a posthumous reproach of a whining masochist who dramatizes (unknowingly and unwittingly) the defense: "I'll show you how I did *not* want to be treated."

A five-layer structure is involved. 1.) "I want to be masochistically mistreated." 2.) First veto of the superego. 3.) First defense of the unconscious ego: "I do not want to be mistreated by my upbringers. On the contrary, I hate them." 4.) Second veto of the superego. 5.) Second defense

of the unconscious ego: "I don't want mistreatment, and neither do I hate my upbringers. I just want to show them how I did *not* want to be treated."

A caricature of parental behavior is set in motion. Perfectionism is a good object lesson — many children consider their parents to be too-unyielding sticklers for the "just so."

Of course, the victim of the perfectionist can derive little comfort from the unconscious defensive reasons which dictate such impossibly high standards.

e.) Frequently the victim of a severe superego tries to escape by *projecting* its reproaches. People who "vote dry and live wet" belong in this category. As Oscar Wilde put it, "Duty is what we expect from others."

f.) Finally, perfectionism covers a large group of difficulties not admitted to be neurotic. The impotent man seeking and never finding the "perfect" woman, the frigid sex-shy girl who cannot find the "perfect" husband, are well-known phenomena.

*

These and similar cases lead us to suspect that the defense mechanism, "perfectionism," is one of the mechanisms with which the battered unconscious ego tries to escape the superego's torture, only to be hoist with its own petard. The self-torturing results are difficult to overlook. Confronted with people who insist on *perfection instead of approximation*, we are justified in suspecting neurotic vicissitudes.

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The Law As "Father".

by

Leonard F. Manheim, L.L.B., Ph.D.

An Aspect of the Dickens Pattern.

In 1930 in *The Law and the Modern Mind* Jerome Frank (now a Judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals) undertook to apply the principles of psychoanalytic criticism to an elucidation of those processes which have led to the formulation of the Anglo-American system of common law. Pioneers like Sir Frederick Pollock, Dean Pound, Judge Cardozo, and, most especially, Justice Holmes had insisted that there is nothing sacrosanct about the principle of *stare decisis* and that the adherence of courts and lawyers to the principles laid down in earlier decisions was merely a semi-practical way by which lawyers might prognosticate the future decisions of those courts, provided that the social milieu out of which those decisions had grown had not altered so as to require radical change. What was there about this pragmatic concept which caused old-time lawyers and statesmen to gasp in horror? Why did the conservative teachers and practitioners of Anglo-American law affirm so mightily that their law was never "judge-made", that the function of lawyer and jurist alike was to search piously in a sort of pseudo-heavenly realm of established law and then to announce ritually what they had found there? For them the court might be wrong in its interpretation; the judge might have been too earth-bound to breathe the rarefied atmosphere of the world of pure legal essence. To intimate, however, that no judge had ever visited that realm, that no lawyer had ever explored it, but that both of them were merely formulating immediately useful principles to guide them in their present dilemma was — and still is — to many British and American students of jurisprudence, pure sacrilege.

Judge Frank thought that he had discovered the psycho-analytic basis for this resistance. The average jurist, he felt, was not emotionally mature; he was still "in bondage to infantile goals". Individually and collectively, lawyers were in search of some substitute for the lost image of an omnipotent and omniscient father. Certain theologians thought that they had found such an image in a primitive, anthropomorphic concept of God; the conservative student of jurisprudence substituted for that anthropomorphic God a shadowy figure bearing the names *Lex* and *Aequitas* instead of *Yahweh* and *Elohim*. The only American jurist who, according to Judge Frank, had completely emancipated himself from this bondage to a father-ideal was Mr. Justice Holmes. Judge Cardozo shared the same liberation to an only slighter degree. But does it not dawn upon the reader that both of these outstanding American jurists spent their entire adult life in an attempt to free themselves from the incubus of a lowering, powerful father? To one whose father was the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, to another whose father had been a shame and a plague-spot on the bench of his native state during the days of the Tweed Ring, could there be any goal more worthy of an adult than to eliminate a primitive father-fear in no matter how disguised a form it might appear?

Now it must surely be apparent to any student of Dickens that his unconscious strivings can never be said to have been fully adult. In particular, his attitude toward the various forms of the father-image was marked by that ambivalence, that mixture of filial acceptance and oedipal aggression which is characteristic of the workings of the Unconscious. Mr. Edmund Wilson, then, in pointing out in "The Two Scrooges" that Dickens's reaction to father-fear and its correlative, social damnation, yielded an imaginative and intuitive sympathy with the criminal and the rebel, was reaching only a part of the truth. Charles Dickens loved law and order quite as much as he loved criminals and rebels; he was inclined to yield, to conform, quite as readily as he was prepared to revolt. The father-image as typified in the

Law was never a consistent enemy. With the whole system of English law Dickens had no real quarrel; that he had no concept of the underlying principles as they were later to be enunciated by men like Pollock and Holmes goes without saying. Dickens knew no more law than any bright office boy in a law office could pick up in a year's employment. When he attacked law, he did so by nibbling away at its corners. He denounced breach-of-promise trials and imprisonment for debt in *Pickwick*, the Poor Laws in *Oliver Twist*, shyster practice in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Ecclesiastical Courts in *David Copperfield*, Chancery trials in *Bleak House*, labor law and divorce law in *Hard Times*, administrative bureaucracy in *Little Dorrit*. In most of the earlier novels the pattern is an incidental element in the general pattern of oedipal aggression and reprisal.

To point out Dickens's unconscious motivation in his attack on Law and the elements in the Law which he chooses as the object of such attack is not, I need hardly say, in derogation of Dickens's zeal and mission as a social reformer. Such zeal may arise as the result of a process of dynamic rationalization, but that rationalization and the irrational resentment which led to it should not blind us to the social evil which is attacked nor to the social good which may be accomplished as the result of such an attack. The status of Dickens as a social prophet and reformer has been clearly set forth, by no one better than Professor Edgar Johnson, in his recent biography of Dickens. Professor Johnson has re-stated his position in a letter to the present writer in words which can best speak for themselves:

For a criticism to have an extra-rational or irrational origin is not necessarily for it to remain immaturely irrational; and I think that much of his criticism not only of the law's traditional subjection to historical formulas and archaic rules of procedure but of its function as a protector of privilege rather than justice is sound on a mature level as well. . . . I think Dickens's implied extension of the criticism in *Bleak House* from Chancery to all — or if not all, many — vested interests, and his demonstration that in their megatherian wallowings they ultimately frustrate even the aims and the

welfare of those groups they were developed to favor and protect, goes deep and is in general true.

Yet, having so far conceded the objective validity of the attack on institutions which have been permitted to outlive their usefulness and to perpetuate some of the very wrongs which they sought to remedy, it is still of great value to re-examine some of the subjective elements which led to that attack — and to some rather special variations in the disguises in which those subjective elements hid themselves — in two novels of Dickens's middle period.

Bleak House, it will be remembered, was written directly after the deaths of John Dickens, baby Dora, and sister Fanny. The net result of these three deaths seems to have been a deeper veiling of oedipal aggression in that novel. The sense of guilt engendered by these deaths yielded other propitiatory mechanisms as well. The word *guilt* is used advisedly, for let us not forget that what the Unconscious desires and what the individual does are, to the Unconscious, one and the same thing. Hence the oedipal regressive must do penance for "killing" his father. An Oedipus, to atone for his crime, must put out the eyes that have gazed on the mother he has wed and the father he has slain. An author has other means of propitiation and penance. He can perform the comforting miracle of restoring his father to life in the most exalted form; he can re-create that father in the image that he (the son) loved best; he can call into existence a father-ideal toward whom no "son" could have the slightest objection. He can also (although this phase of the dynamic pattern is not a part of our present commentary) re-create himself in the form of a daughter — whose goal it is to love the father as the son has hated him.

All these things Dickens did in *Bleak House*. This is truly "a novel without a hero". The conventional hero-figures are all banished or minimized, and instead there glows over the entire work the benign influence of that best of all fathers, John Jarndyce. Mr. Jarndyce is indeed the kind of father one would — and does — dream about. His benevolence toward the "orphaned" Esther makes even Bet-

sey Trotwood's belated acceptance of her obligations to David pale into insignificance. John Jarndyce lives in Bleak House, surrounded by the children who are not his children (Esther, Ada, and Richard). As the Lord Chancellor points out, the residence has a forbidding name. But it is not a forbidding place at all, but a cozy house with many queerly-shaped rooms and odd corridors, a house of which its chosen inhabitants might truly say, "In my Father's house there are many mansions". The ill-used real-life father has gone to his grave, a bleak — even black — house indeed. Yet the "bleak house" in which he now lives is, despite its forbidding name, not a bad place at all.

There is no single flaw in the character of John Jarndyce except his involvement — against his will, of course — in the Chancery proceedings of which he is the innocent victim. Heaven forbid that he should take the same interest in the old case of *Jarndyce against Jarndyce* that drove his relative Tom to suicide, and which is destined to bring his misguided ward Richard to an early grave. There never was a kindlier, more long-suffering, gentler father than John Jarndyce; beside him even the Christ-like Daniel Peggotty fades into insignificance. What better atonement could one make to a once-despised father?

Yet it is atonement on the level of fantasy and not adjustment on the level of reality, for running alongside the apotheosis of this paragon of fathers there is a more deeply hidden aggression against the image of the Law as Father, as symbolized by the Courts of Chancery, in their turn symbolized by the foul figure of Krook, the filthy old junk-dealer. Even in this deeply disguised revolt against authority, it is still the anthropomorphic viewpoint which best suits Dickens, and after disguising the Father as the Law, he symbolizes the Law in a human figure. And that human figure which represents the entire legal system is not a hated lawyer like "Conversation" Kenge, insidious Mr. Vholes, or skulking Mr. Tulkinghorn; not Mr. Snagsby, the hen-pecked law-stationer; not even the shrewd and dominating arm of the Law, Inspector Bucket. It is Krook, literally and figurative-

ly hidden beneath a heap of old clothes. He must perish, but it must be by the hand of no man; no, not even by an externally visible act of God. Krook must perish (as must both the wicked father and the Chancery system in the dual symbolism) by and through his own foulness. There is no murder such as was used to rid us of another wicked father-figure, Lawyer Tulkinghorn, no fortuitous apoplexy, no wasting illness. No, Krook must perish through nothing short of spontaneous combustion! *Sic semper patribus!* Krook the evil father-law-image — and all bad fathers with him — are exploded, exorcised, and banished to oblivion — until they come to life again in the next novel.

And they do come to life as often as they are slain. In both symbolical and concrete form we have the father-enemy again, with a much diluted father-ideal, in *Little Dorrit*. Even apart from the figures of William and Frederick Dorrit, in whom the old aggressive and idealizing trends are balanced once again in a newer and more vivid form, let us note the revival of the drive against Father-Law as embodied in the denunciation of the institutions of British bureaucracy under the name of the Circumlocution Office. Here Dickens has made fuller use of the best technique of fantasy, the creation of a mythological figure as well as of symbolic individuals upon which to vent his conscious indignation and his unconscious spleen. The free play which he gives to his aggression here, coupled with the happy use of some of his best humor and satire, produces a brilliant anthropomorphic image of the institution attacked, in the family of the Barnacles.

And with this novel the aggression against the law is attenuated little by little through a complex process of adjustment which results in at least partial acceptance of the figures which represent the law (as we also find an at least surface acceptance of the Established Church) in the later characters of Mr. Milvey, Eugene Wrayburn, Septimus Cris-

parkle, and Mr. Grewgious. But that is another story, which we have no opportunity to investigate here.

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A Psychological Approach To Shelley's Poetry

by

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Defining the literary critics' proper boundaries has long been the concern of many whom Plato would have called those who are fourth removed from Beauty — the critics of the critics; and certainly the current quantity of publications on literary criticism is testimony to the fact that the boundary lines are, perhaps, more uncertain today than they have ever been, especially in the case of a critic who removes himself to another discipline such as sociology or psychology to view what is going on in literature. However, as William Barrett has recognized, by mid-century it was a

significant fact that the modern consciousness had at last become conscious of itself in literature, and this consciousness demanded that the literary work be assimilated in relation to a great many and complicated interests — anthropology, psychology, sociology, and various possibilities of religious belief. (1)

This paper, then, shall make no apology for approaching the poetry of Shelley from the point of view of twentieth century psychology, except to say that, of course, no presumption is made that this is the only significant or even the most valuable approach to Shelley's or any one else's literary work. It seems, however, that an investigation of the relationship between a poet's personality and his poetry can no longer ignore the psychological discoveries made by Sigmund Freud and his followers since *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900. As the late Professor Matthiessen said, "It is no longer meaningful to present Shelley's career without a firm and bold penetration into some of the psychological problems that it contains." (2)

Richard Sterba has admirably summarized Freud's findings as they relate to artistic creativity. The essence of Freud's approach is that art is an activity whose aim is to assuage unappeased wishes and, therefore, has at its base the same forces that make up intra-psychic conflicts.

The work of art is, therefore, the product of psychic forces which are in opposition to each other, such as desire and inner prohibition. . . . The fundamental dynamic at the root of a work of art is an unfulfilled wish of the artist; just as in fantasies, the work of art represents the wish fulfilled. (3)

The artist is an introvert who unable to satisfy his overpowering instinctual needs in the world of reality, turns to fantasy, which embodied in a work of art is a sublimation of the neurotic wish and is acceptable to society.

In general, Freud used poetry as the paradigmatic basis for his investigations in the field of the psychology of art because . . . poetry stands nearest the dream and fantasy, those all-important objects of psychological research. (4)

The artist uses three techniques to overcome the refusal of others to participate in his fantasies: (1) transforming the fantasy — masquerading the repulsive wish, tempering it, removing it from the subjective to the objective, thus making it acceptable, (2) surrounding the fantasy with an atmosphere of reality or pseudo-reality in which not the laws of the outside world, but the conscious and unconscious wishes of the artist are the determining factors, and (3) giving the fantasy aesthetic features that make palatable the aggressive and obscene by a cast in beauty.

With these principles in mind, let us proceed to an examination of certain features of the personality of Shelley. The popular concept of Shelley as the distilled essence of a pure poet in love or as an "ineffectual angel" in political philosophy is fading. Any high school student can read in *Time* magazine that the "most famed neurotic of them all was Shelley." (5)

Though we cannot in this brief space review all the sig-

nificant data relative to Shelley's life, we can cite events representative of significant personality patterns. From a reading of Newman Ivey White's definitive biography, we discover that Shelley early developed a violent hatred for his father. Although White qualifies and rationalizes Timothy Shelley's attitude toward his son, he does present facts from which we can draw our own conclusions. For example, he says:

No doubt the miscreant's [Shelley's] consequent notoriety was deeply felt as an affront to the family respectability and hardened his father's attitude to inflexibility. When Mrs. Houston first met Helen Shelley she was warned never to utter the poet's name in Sir Timothy's hearing. (6)

After the poet's death Sir Timothy made his financial provisions for Mary Shelley and her son contingent upon Mary's not bringing Shelley's name before the public. When the poet's first son, Charles, died in 1826, Sir Timothy buried him in the Warnham parish church with the other Shelleys there, but the tablet mentions him as the grandson of Sir Timothy and pointedly omits the name of his parents. To White, these facts form the basis of the current characterization of the poet's father as wrong-headed and stubborn. "According to later standards the characterization seems just," White says, "but only as applied to the treatment of one of his children who would have been similarly treated by most orthodox English parents of his class and generation." (7) Thus, White's biography early establishes the bad relations between the poet and his father.

Shelley's response to such treatment indicates a tremendous emotional disturbance. During the strained period after Shelley's expulsion from Oxford, the poet, defying his father's demands that he break off relations with his ex-room-mate Hogg with whom he wrote the *Necessity of Atheism*, wrote to his sire:

Obedience is, in my opinion, a word which should have no existence. You regard it as necessary. . . Had I enough money I would meet you in London and hollow

in your ears Bysshe, Bysshe, Bysshe — aye, Bysshe, till you're deaf. (8)

Even earlier, according to Rosetti's *Memoirs*, Shelley was known "among his schoolfellows for a habit of cursing his father and the king and that he bestowed upon his father such nicknames as 'Old Buck' and 'Killjoy'." (9) Obviously Shelley's rejection of his father was a long-standing one reaching back into childhood and developing almost to the point of hysteria until, as we shall attempt to demonstrate, it extended to a complete, fiery-tempered rejection of all symbols of authority and became one of the leading motifs of his poetry.

In a letter to Godwin, Shelley wrote:

I have never loved my father — it was not from hardness of heart, for I have loved and do love warmly. . . I have known no tutor or adviser (not excepting my father) from whose lessons and suggestions I have not recoiled with disgust. The knowledge which I have has been acquired by my unassisted efforts. (10)

Shelley was forever rationalizing his personal emotional difficulties into abstract principles and ideational conflicts in real life as well as in poetry. Here Shelley clearly reveals that his concept of the poet as "the unacknowledged legislator of the world," and his belief that the "most unfailing herald companion and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution is poetry," (11) stem from a personal, emotional, Oedipal antagonism toward his father. Those who praise Shelley's keen, liberal political sagacity, his profundity in observing political and social evil, and his use of poetry as a tool toward human betterment, overlook the possibility that Shelley as a poet of protest was not a product of mature development but was rather merely a little boy who never developed, except in his ability to handle the language of poetry, out of the obstinate little brat who for "the delight of his sisters . . . wrote verses satirizing their French teacher." (12)

As a young schoolboy away from home at Syon Academy,

Shelley found himself unable to adapt to the social environment of young students under the strict disciplinary tutelage of his house masters. One of his schoolmates, John Rennie, has reported that Shelley had a "violent and extremely excitable temper, which manifested itself in all kinds of eccentricities. . . The least circumstance that thwarted him produced the most violent paroxysms of rage." (13) White summarizes this period thus:

He was really living in three very vivid worlds, an actual, predominantly hostile world of the schoolroom and playground; an actual, friendly world of Field Place; and an ideal world of romantic and pseudo-scientific imagination. . . He realized clearly that between his benevolent world of the imagination and his tyrannical world of reality continual warfare was inevitable. At the age of twelve he dedicated himself to a Messianic mission. (14)

Apparently White does not realize that he has here put his finger on one of the key patterns that dominated Shelley's life and profoundly influenced his poetry. Shelley never really changed from the barely tutored youth who fled into an escapist world of romanticism from the real world that demanded recognition of authority. Since Shelley could not cope with authoritarian forces in reality, he resorted to a world of fantasy in poetry where, of course, he was the authority and where, of course, he wrought his revenge or sought the sympathy of his readers for his unhappy plight.

The poet's life at Eton between the ages of twelve and eighteen intensified the pattern of imaginative escape from discipline. White describes the impossibly rigid rules with minute detail and explains that the slightest infraction resulted in punishment by flogging. It was a rather unsympathetic discipline imposed from above, a scheme of life that he was ill-fitted for more profoundly than White indicates and which he had already learned to resent. "At Eton young Shelley's habits and associations were not very different from what they had been at Syon House Academy

. . . most of the boys thought him mad. He became known as "Mad Shelley." (15)

Of course, it is not difficult to sympathize with the young poet, but the problem is not one of sympathy; it is rather a need to understand that Shelley was not a stable personality in the first place and that these experiences further emphasized already established neurotic patterns which were to find expression again and again.

For example, concerning Shelley's ill-fated attempt to aid in the Irish Rebellion, White says, "There is no indication that Shelley made anything like a thorough study of the situation before he embarked on his venture. . . One quality, however, he had in abundance — enthusiasm." (16) Here, as in other cases, we cannot cite the wealth of details, but it again becomes abundantly clear that we are not dealing with a man who has high regard for the *facts* of a situation, but with one who acts from a foundation of emotional antipathy to authority. The question, as it applies to Shelley, is not whether conditions in Ireland were sufficiently bad to warrant revolution, or whether under certain conditions revolution is a justifiable means to an end, but rather whether Shelley was behaving from a knowledge of facts leading to revolutionary convictions or from a revolution against authority that was in Shelley's "blood", in his personal, emotional make-up.

Shelley's need to heap responsibility for his misfortunes on some authoritarian institution led him to strike out eventually at the Church. In 1811, after Shelley had left Harriet, he experienced another of those intellectualized temper tantrums in which (whenever his personal lot was miserable) he attributed evil to authoritarian, abstract values. White reports that:

Hogg's unhappiness, the defection of Elizabeth, his relatively petty domestic discomforts of the moment, all seemed to stem directly or indirectly from the pernicious doctrine of Christianity. "My unhappiness is excessive. . . But that which injured me shall perish! . . . Oh, how I burn with impatience for the moment

of the dissolution of Christianity; it has injured me. I swear on the altar of perjured love to revenge myself . . . and let me hope it will not be a blow which spends itself and leaves the wretch at rest, but waiting, long revenge. (17)

Thus was this aspect of Shelley's neurotic make-up developed. This young boy, the only son in a house full of girls, the carrier of the family line and potential inheritor of a seat in Parliament, was raised by a stupid country-squire of a father in such a way that the boy early developed an antipathy toward parental authority. His experiences at Syon, Eton and Oxford served to intensify his already established emotional fear of and belligerence toward teachers as well as toward all adults in a position to direct or dominate the lives of subordinates. We see that this same rebellion was transferred toward politicians, churchmen and finally toward God, the highest authority of all. Thus was a major pattern woven into the fabric of Shelley's personality.

Another pre-dominant factor in Shelley's make-up was his unsatisfactory sexual adjustment. Despite White's own interpretations of the situations, again he presents us with enough evidence from which we can safely conclude that Shelley was rarely a satisfied, happy man in his sexual relations. Commentators have often cited Shelley's effeminate appearance, and much of his behavior was quite in line with his looks. Although our twentieth century knowledge and understanding of homosexuality and of its normal occurrence among adolescent and pre-adolescent children prevent us from making adverse moral judgments of it, we must take cognizance of it in relation to Shelley's incomplete and inadequate heterosexual adjustment.

White tells us that Shelley's first close friend remains anonymous, but that Shelley says of him, "I recollect thinking my friendship exquisitely beautiful. Every night when we parted to go to bed, I remember we kissed each other." (18) White also notes without attaching enough significance to it that throughout his life Shelley's friendships with men were always much more stable and lasting than his relations

with women. In this connection we recall the roll of Medwin, Hogg, Hunt, Godwin, Peacock, Byron and Horace Smith, who were all constant friends or objects of admiration from the time Shelley met them to the day of his death.

The circumstances surrounding Shelley's first marriage to Harriet Westbrook stem directly from his emotional anti-authoritarianism and unquestionably demonstrate his unrealistic methods of dealing with whatever he considered to be abuses of authority. Immediately after writing to Hogg, "If I know anything about love, I am *not* in love," (19) Shelley departed to London to rescue Harriet from the persecution which she suffered at the hands of her father and her teachers for corresponding with him. Later he wrote, "I advised her to resist. She wrote to say that resistance was useless, but that she would fly with me, and threw herself on my protection. We shall have £200 a year. . . Gratitude and admiration all demand that I should love her forever." (20)

White clearly indicates, however, that Shelley's emotional attachment was closer to Hogg than it ever was to Harriet. Shortly after his marriage, he left Harriet in the care of Hogg while he returned to Field Place to arrange an increase in his income, to visit Elizabeth Hitchener with whom he maintained a "marriage of minds", and to arrange a match between Hogg and his own sister Elizabeth. Ultimately he failed in all three projects, but while he was away, Hogg, knowing and sharing Shelley's beliefs in free love, attempted to seduce Harriet. It was only after long deliberation and months of correspondence that Shelley submitted to Harriet's wishes and renounced the closest friendship he ever had, and then he did so only temporarily. During the interim he claimed Elizabeth Hitchener "the sister of my soul," "the friend of my heart," "my second self," "and the stronger shadow of that soul whose dictates I have been accustomed to obey." (21) Never a man to live alone with a woman, even a wife, Shelley invited Elizabeth to live with them, but day-to-day contact soon made her obnoxious to the Shelleys and under very distressing circumstances she was

summarily dismissed from the family. Shelley then resumed relations with Hogg. (22)

After Harriet had a child, she dropped her attempts to keep up with Shelley's intellectual pretensions and devoted herself to the simpler pleasures of housewifely activities. As he was quite often to do later, Shelley then became interested in a young lady, Cornelia Turner, whom White describes as "no Elizabeth Hitchener. She was young, accomplished, physically attractive and spoke the language of sentimental sympathy." (23) Shelley often referred to her as his "lover", though White insists that Shelley meant the word in a Platonic sense only. At any rate, the pattern of Shelley's inability to continue a satisfactory relationship and devoted love toward a single object was already clearly established and was to continue throughout the rest of his life.

It was not much later that Shelley became infatuated with Mary Godwin, who was approaching seventeen and was quite attractive. Though we cannot review all the details here, it is enough to note that he left his pregnant wife and son to elope to France with Mary Godwin *and* her half-sister, Claire, who lived with the couple almost regularly until Shelley's death. Upon his return to London, while attempting to arrange a formal divorce from Harriet, Shelley began what White describes as a "strange and almost incredible situation between himself, Mary and Hogg." Shelley invited Hogg to share Mary's love, a proposal which pleased all parties immensely. White says:

She was at the time expecting to become a mother . . . so that for months to come the matter would have no physical importance. . . She asked only for time to be able to make Hogg completely happy. . . Meanwhile they could hope and need not be too prudent. One thinks of Shelley's desire for Hogg's union with his sister Elizabeth, of the Hogg-Harriet affair, of Shelley's later affection for Jane Williams, followed by her union with Hogg. One wonders if this . . . is not in fact slightly insane. (24)

Shelley's sexual peculiarities continued to manifest themselves in a variety of ways — both in his real behavior and in his fantasies. These latter approach the sort of visions often cited in the literature of psychotic behavior. For example, just before his strange sojourn with Byron in Switzerland in 1816, as Shelley related it to Medwin five years later, a genuine disciple — a married woman of wealth and social position — placed her life, her fortune, and her reputation entirely at his disposal. All she asked was to be able to accompany him as his devoted lover and disciple. Deeply touched, Shelley explained to the unknown lady as delicately as possible that he could not accept her devotion. Nevertheless, she followed him to Switzerland and gazed at him from afar with a spyglass. Later, she was for one night in the same hotel in which he lodged; finally, she talked to him again in Naples and died while he was in the city. No one has ever discovered any evidence that would substantiate Shelley's story, and White explains his fantasy in these significant terms:

He had just lost a disciple when Claire's primary allegiance was transferred to Byron. Disciples, feminine by preference, were such a necessity that it was just possible he invented this one for his own consolation. (25)

What White fails to realize, as we shall demonstrate later, is that the same explanation is a key to an understanding of the events in Shelley's dramatic poetry. Shelley, unable to resolve his personal-emotional problems in real life, always resorted to fantasy and to poetry.

During his life in Italy, Shelley suffered a prolonged period of dejection over his unsatisfactory relationship with Mary and often turned to other women for love and consolation. There are mysterious episodes which biographers cannot explain, such as the death of a strange child believed by some to be Shelley's bastard by Claire. (26)

Shelley's spirits were revived when he met Sophia Stacey, who "was rather fond of social life, . . . had an excellent, well-trained voice, and some superficial interest in ideas and events, but . . . fundamentally a simple, ingenuous English

girl with a touch of sentimentalism." (27) For her Shelley wrote some of his best lyric poems.

A year after that, 1820, Shelley met Emelia Viviani, a lovely, nineteen-year-old Italian girl who was living in a convent until her father considered her of age to marry a man not of her choice. She was an extremely beautiful woman who wrote poetry and who was oppressed by parental authority; thus, she fulfilled the ideal Shelley had envisioned in *Alastor* years before. As was to be expected from Shelley's already strongly established behavior pattern, he found himself thoroughly in love with her. One may well exclaim, "Shades of Harriet Westbrook!" Emilia became the object of his poetic admiration in *Epipsychidion*, some shorter poems, and fragments in his note books in which he wrote, "I feel thy trembling lips — I hear the murmur of thy voice divine." (29) Throughout the spring and summer of that year, much to Mary's jealous disturbance, Shelley continued to visit Emilia until her marriage in September. Even four months after her marriage Shelley found occasion to write to John Gisborne, "My convent friend . . . is married, and I am in a sort of morbid quietness." (30)

But by January of the following year "Shelley's admiration for Jane Williams had produced two poems, which show that it was to Jane, rather than Mary, that he looked for the bright moments of spiritual sunshine." (31) White insists they were not in love, "even though Mary might have thought the situation dangerous in its future possibilities (32) . . . With her combination of music, sympathy, and beauty, Jane could create moments of divine forgetfulness for Shelley." (33)

Thus, in the course of his brief life, Shelley apparently always pursued, but never realized, a goal of union with an ideal mate through varying degrees of intimacy with Harriet Grove, Elizabeth Hitchener, Harriet Westbrook, Cornelia Turner, Mary Godwin, Claire Clairmont, Sophia Stacey, Emilia Viviani, and Jane Williams, as well as with strange, unnamed women of his fantasies.

His frustrations in these two major areas of his life —

his inability to adjust adequately to authority and his inability to achieve stable heterosexual relationships — were manifested by a strange, somewhat paranoid behavior which led many of his contemporaries and some of his critics to label Shelley as insane. Throughout his life Shelley was always seeking to justify his behavior by assuming a superior, Messianic role and by convincing himself and trying to convince others that he was the object of persecution on the part of evil forces. For every year of his life documented records are available to show that he could never look clearly at the real world; between Shelley and the world was a shimmering veil of neurotic emotionalism which filtered the real through the imaginative. "Witnesses . . . have mentioned an impression in Horsham, at Syon House, Eton, and Oxford that Shelley was 'mad' or 'half-mad'; also . . . this was the personal impression of a large proportion of those who have left comments on Shelley as they knew him in early life."

(34)

White gives us a clearly detailed account revealing that:

As a child he was constantly trying to recreate in his physical world the experiences he had encountered only in his imagination. This is not unusual with highly imaginative children, but with Shelley it lasted throughout his life. Those critics who like Francis Thompson have regarded Shelley as the Eternal Child were partly right. (35)

Unfortunately we have not the space here to review all the details and incidents that demonstrate how often Shelley found, justly or unjustly, that the real world in which he lived was intolerable and resorted often in poetry to a wide variety of delusions — delusions of of grandeur in which he was a great, superhuman power who could change it all and delusions of persecution in which he sought to enlist the sympathy and aid of others in ministering to his tortured soul. We know, for example, that as a boy he was completely caught up with the highly imaginative Gothic novels in which the superhuman so often triumphed over evil (36) and with

the fascinations and mysteries of chemical science — especially when a great deal of noise and smoke was involved. (37) We know that long before the *Necessity of Atheism* episode which caused his expulsion from Oxford and his subsequent rift with his father, Shelley imagined his father to be a vicious monster seeking to send him to a madhouse. (38) He imagined that he had “caught” elephantiasis from a woman in a coach and went madly screaming for help. (39) When *Alastor* failed to receive favorable reviews, he imagined himself to be generally hated and “resolved either to desert England or retire to some solitary region of the country . . . to hide from that contempt which we so unjustly endure.” (40)

He often had quite real and vivid visits from monsters and ghosts, as at Tanyrallt when he shot at a mysterious figure who swore revenge by threatening to ravage his sister and murder his wife. Shelley’s own sketch of the man resembled clearly a Mephistopheles with horns. (41) In Switzerland he screamed in terror at the visitation of a deformed witch who had eyes for nipples on her breasts. (42) These were not isolated events which we have culled out of the context of his life, but they were common occurrences to which White makes constant reference.

At one time, after a visit from a man whom he had never seen before, he commented, “I am resolved to have nothing more to do with the man . . . as I fear the man has some deep scheme.” (43) Before his trip to Ireland he wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener, his soul-mate, “What do you think of my undertaking? Shall I not get into prison? . . . Share with us the most glorious martyrdom!” (44) An analytic discussion of Shelley’s paranoid delusions would alone constitute several fat volumes.

Granted that what has thus far been presented of Shelley’s personality is extracted from the intricate context of a life that did include moments of calm, rational, sane behavior, can we approach the creative work of such a man without reference to his obviously neurotic make-up? The present writer thinks not. Almost all the poetry Shelley

ever wrote fits an interpretation that roots it in Shelley's peculiar nature — in his anti-authoritarian wrath based on his early hatred of his father, and on his unfulfilled urge to find a satisfactory mate. These are the central motifs to which all else is supplementary and subordinate. They are the clues to an understanding of the dramatic situations in all of Shelley's creative work from his early Gothic novel, *Zastrozzi*, to the *Zucca* and *With a Guitar to Jane* of 1822. Even though the language and style of his poetry assumed more and more a quality which on aesthetic grounds alone must be classified with the great literature of the language, the content — what he had to say — suffered no essential modification.

Since White considers *Zastrozzi* "one of the poorest examples of one of the poorest types of fiction ever published in England," (45) he gives it little attention, but from our point of view this work of the seventeen-year-old Shelley is extremely important since it contains the basic elements we have already indicated and which remained the central motifs of all his subsequent work.

Zastrozzi, the hero, is a fiery, terrible person who turns out in the end to be a self-elected minister of justice inspired by the memory of his mother's wrongs. His foil, a benevolent, mysterious character named Verezzi, is an object of revenge. One heroine, Matilda, is beautiful and passionate; the other, Julia, is ethereally virtuous. These characters interact upon each other as if hypnotized by a nervous practitioner whose intent is only hazily perceptible through a thick murk of Gothic novel passions. (46)

Notwithstanding the fact that this is standard stuff in Gothic novels, it is significant that Shelley responded as strongly as he did to them and turned to the fantasies involved there. Note that we have in *Zastrozzi* the image of authority as a "fiery, terrible person," that his victim is a "benevolent, mysterious character," and remember that these same descriptions apply in Shelley's mind to his father and himself. Note, too, that the qualities that Shelley ad-

mired and sought in a woman are here divided between two women, that "beauty and passion" on the one hand and "ethereal virtue" are dichotomous. Is it not more than superficially interesting that Shelley, long before he embarked on his tempestuous romantic and marital career, presented the qualities he thought most desirable in women as unattainable in a single love object? In one form or another the themes of *Zastrozzi* are in everything Shelley wrote afterward.

Five years after this work, 1815, in *Alastor*, which critics consider the first of Shelley's mature work, we find the unattainable-love theme developed in such a way as to inspire pity for the unhappy poet's lot. The protagonist, "a Poet . . . a lovely youth . . . gentle and brave and generous" who "when early youth had passed, left his cold fireside and alienated home" (11.50-76) (47) and who while wandering over the earth in search of strange truths dreamed of a veiled maid with the qualities of "knowledge and truth and virtue . . . and lofty hopes of divine liberty and poesy, herself a poet." (11.158-61) Unlike *Zastrozzi*, the ideal woman here has combined intellectual qualities suitable to Shelley with physical beauty and passion:

Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
Her locks now floating in the breath of night,
Her beamy, bending eyes, her parted lips
Outstretched and pale, and quivering eagerly

...

Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms. (11. 176-98)

But he wakes from his dream to find that she is "Lost, lost, forever lost." In a passionate despair "like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream," he seeks the object of his love, "obedient to the light that shone within his soul," in vain until he dies. Needless to say, the poem is subject to a variety of interpretations, and we, of course, have not

cited all the evidence for ours; however, it seems clear that here, too, Shelley leaves his father's cold fireside and alienated home to seek in vain an ideal mate.

In *The Revolt of Islam*, Shelley's most clearly autobiographical poem, we find extensive preoccupation with the "harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes." Note these significant lines:

Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
I cared to learn. . . (39-40)
Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
To those who seek all sympathies in one. . .
Never found I one not false to me. . . (46-51)
. . . for none
Knew good from evil, though their names were hung
In mockery where many a groan,
As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend
did own (376-79)
. . .
. . . At last,
As from a music of magic store, I drew
Words which were weapons. (840-42)

After a repetitious, long-winded description of wavering battles with the forces of authoritarian tyranny, Shelley's wish-fulfillment in fantasy and his near-paranoia lead him to write:

Some said I was a maniac wild and lost: . . .
I was a fiend from some weird cave. . .
. . .
I was the child of God sent down to save
Women from bonds and death. . .
But soon my human words found sympathy
In human hearts; the purest and best,
As friend with friend, made common cause with me. . .
(3532-3544)

Then ensues bloody battles for the liberation of women, a devastating plague involving more corpses than we can

find in a hundred Gothic novels. Laon chooses to burn at the stake with Cythna when the battle against the forces of evil is lost. In death he achieves union with his perfect mate; together they sail among the heavens to the Temple of the Spirit.

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full
Of love and wisdom, which would overflow
In converse wild and sweet . . .
. . . and we did know
That virtue, though obscured on earth, not less
Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness (4774-82)

It survives because for Shelley it must survive. Thus, again, the central and basic element of Shelley's poem is conflict with the forces of authority who are pictured as evil tyrants preventing the poet from achieving union with the ideal woman. So strong is Shelley's drive for such union that in the poetic fantasy, he does achieve it after death.

In *Julian and Maddalo* Shelley, in a somewhat Wordsworthian vein, tells us the story of a man gone mad through unrequited love. The limitations of this paper prevent us from undertaking a line by line explication, but the obvious relationship of the following lines of our dual-motif approach again confirms the thesis of this paper:

That we have power over ourselves we know
..... to do
. . . something nobler than to live and die —
So taught the kings of old philosophy
Who reigned before Religion made men blind. (184-89)

A lady came with him from France and when
She left him and returned, he wandered then
About yon lonely isles of desert sand
Till he grew wild. . . 246-49)

. . . if love and tenderness and truth
Had overlived hope's momentary youth
My creed should have redeemed me from repenting
(330-33)

Me — who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth (448-49)

Yet if thine aged eyes disdain to wet
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears
Ask me no more, but let the silent years
Be closed and cased over their memory
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.
I urged and questioned still, she told me how
All happened — but the cold world shall not know.
(611-17)

Without extensive variation the same conflict situations, the same struggle of virtuous youth and love against tyrannical evil, are involved in *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Cenci*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*. A full-length study would not require unusually precise wielding of a scalpel to lay bare this same thematic content, and no doubt the reader familiar with those poems can recall the stories in the terms presented here. Let us look at certain lines of just one more poem, *The Zucca*, to see that even in 1822 at the end of his career Shelley was still preoccupied with the same basic concerns:

. . . I, desiring
More in this world than any understand,
Wept o'er the beauty, which, like sea retiring,
Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
Of my lorn heart. . . (3-7)

I loved — oh, no, I mean not one of ye,
Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
As human heart to human heart can be;
I loved, I know not what — but this low sphere
And all that it contains, contains not thee,
Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere. (17-22)

Thus, in 1822 at the end of his all too brief life, as in 1809 when he wrote *Zastrozzi*, Shelley had not yet found on earth the satisfying love which he so passionately sought. By

then, so it seems from his poetry, he had ceased to curse the forces of authority for his failure, but succumbed to a passive despair.

Certainly we have attempted too much in trying to pack into this brief study as much as we have. In summary, let us merely say that a detailed, full-length study seems appropriate for the examination of these four factors:

(1) Shelley early developed a hatred toward his father, which developed into a hatred toward teachers, politicians, kings, churchmen and priests, and finally toward the greatest of his contemporary authorities, God.

(2) Shelley never achieved a satisfactory heterosexual adjustment. Until he went to school at the age of ten he was raised in a house full of girls. He had at least tendencies toward homosexuality at school and even later. He invited the sexual attentions of his best friend, Hogg, to be directed toward both of his wives. He never lived alone with either wife for any prolonged period. To the day of his death he had at least "spiritual" relations with a variety of women, but never found a satisfactory union with the perfect mate he sought.

(3) These two related factors motivated a strange sympathy-seeking behavior simultaneously with a strong megalomania. In other words Shelley was somewhat paranoid — he had delusions of persecution and delusions of grandeur.

(4) Since he could not achieve satisfaction of his drives in the real world, he had to sublimate. He created narrative dramatic poetry in which he could achieve vicarious satisfaction or sympathy through his characters. All of Shelley's heroes demand our sympathy for their unhappiness (usually in situations of frustrated love) and our admiration for their righteous, anti-authoritarian wrath.

But the victories of artistic sublimation are not lasting enough or successful enough, and the poet who tries to find solace there must in the long run fail. Thus it was with Shelley, who died unhappy and left the record of his neuroticism in his poetry. White apparently did not realize the real

significance of his passing remark, "Of few writers more than Shelley can it be said that his works are the man himself."

(48)

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FOOTNOTES

1. William Barrett, "A Present Tendency in American Criticism," *Kenyon Review*, XI (1949), 4.
2. F. O. Matthessen, "A New Appraisal of Shelley," *NYTBR*, January 5, 1947, p. 5.
3. Richard Sterba, "The Problem of Art in Freud's Writings," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, IX (1940), 258.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
5. "As Sane as Anybody," *Time*, LI (December 15, 1947), 61.
6. Newman Ivey White, *Shelley* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), I, 13. Throughout the remainder of this paper, the biography will be cited by volume and page reference only.
7. I, 13.
8. I, 163.
9. As cited by Thomas Vernor Moore to whom I am indebted for many of my ideas, although I reject his moralistic interpretation. "Percy Bysshe Shelley," *Psychological Monographs*, XXXI (1922), 20.
10. I, 189. This is especially interesting in the light of K. N. Cameron's somewhat idealized biography in which he asserts that "as a child Shelley was exceedingly fond of his father." *The Young Shelley* (New York - Macmillan, 1950, p. 2.
11. Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Defence of Poetry," ed. by James H. Smith and Edd W. Parks in *The Great Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939), p. 555-83.
12. I, 46.
13. I, 27.
14. I, 27-30.
15. I, 36-37.
16. I, 207. Ernest Jones has observed that "resentment against the father may be more or less openly manifested later on, a rebellion which occurs commonly enough, though the true meaning of it is not recognized. To this source many social revolutionaries — perhaps all — owe the original impetus of their rebelliousness against authority . . . for instance, with Shelley and Mirabeau."

Hamlet and Oedipus (New York: Anchor Books, 1954), p. 89.

17. I, 205.
18. I, 28.
19. I, 149.
20. I, 150.
21. I, 199.
22. I, 264-67.
23. I, 323-30.
24. I, 392.
25. I, 437.
26. II, 71-82. White reviews the evidence both for and against the Shelley-Claire parentage and concludes that the child was really by parents unknown to us. White's opinion seems to have been confirmed by subsequent research; an examination of Claire's diary reveals that Claire's menstrual periods at the time rule out the possibility of her being the mother. Cf. Marcel Kessel, "The Mark of X in Claire Clairmont's Journals," *PMLA*, LXVI (December, 1951), 1180-83.
27. II, 173.
28. II, 174.
29. II, 253-54.
30. II, 319.
31. II, 343.
32. II, 347.
33. II, 364. Cameron comments that "the search for a woman who would bring passionate warmth to him (never, primarily, him to her) continued throughout his life," *op. cit.*, p. 238.
34. I, 592.
35. II, 445.
- 36-42. I, 21-24; I, 37; I, 312; I, 432; I, 280-82.
43. I, 49.
44. I, 197.
45. I, 55.
46. I, 55-56. The phrase "as if hypnotized by a nervous practitioner whose intent is only hazily perceptible through a thick murk" may well be used as a starting point in a study of the strange stylistic quality that marks so much of Shelley's poetry, but that is a problem for another time and place. The point here is that Zastrozzi is not to be lightly dismissed as insignificant to a study of Shelley and his work.
47. All line references to the poems are from *John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley: Complete Poetical Works*, with the explanatory notes of Shelley's poems by Mrs. Shelley (New York: The Modern Library, n.d.)
48. II, 11.

The Personality of Joseph

by

Dorothy F. Zeligs

Among the biblical heroes of ancient Israel, the personality of Joseph, son of Jacob, stands out as one of particular interest and appeal. Why should this be so? Joseph does not have the impressive, somewhat daemonic power of Abraham and Jacob, men who stood in terrifying intimacy to God Himself. Nor does he have the romantic aura of such figures as David and Solomon, the kingly heroes of Israel in the days of its greatness.

What, then, is the basis of the universality of response that Joseph has evoked in so many people throughout the centuries? Is his just another "success" story of a country boy who made good? This element certainly adds to the appeal but would hardly be a sufficient explanation of such long-term popularity. It seems to the writer that Joseph, because of his very human qualities, offers many opportunities for identifications. The conflicts that he goes through and the feelings he experiences touch upon familiar areas in many people's lives. Yet a number of scholars, particularly in the period when "modern biblical criticism" came into vogue, tended to regard Joseph, together with the other early leaders of Israel, as generic figures representing tribes rather than individual personalities. Joseph was therefore looked upon as symbolizing the "Joseph tribe," one of the groups of ancient Hebrews which migrated to Egypt. (1)

More recent tendencies in biblical scholarship favor the older view that these heroes of the Bible could have been, and probably were, actual historical figures. (2) It should be an interesting problem, therefore, to see whether a psychoanalytic approach to the study of Joseph as a personality may help to determine whether he has psychological validity as a real person. To what extent did Joseph's behavior stem

logically from his character? How much of his personality can be understood in terms of the early influences of his life? Our purpose here is not to prove that Joseph was once a real person, but rather to investigate the degree to which he might have been, and thus perhaps clarify more fully the reasons for the popular interest he has aroused.

Joseph was the second to the youngest of Jacob's thirteen children, his eleventh son. He was, however, the first-born child of Rachel, who was Jacob's beloved. Joseph occupied a favored position with both his parents, a fact which must have had a deep influence upon his character development and life experiences.

At the time when Joseph was born, Jacob had reached a period in his life which, we can assume, had a certain mellowed maturity. His love for this son, therefore, would be marked by little ambivalence. There is no indication that Jacob was unduly ambivalent to any of his sons since he had largely resolved the problem of his own sibling rivalry with Esau and worked through a good deal of his Oedipal conflicts, leading to reconciliation with his father Isaac. These factors are discussed at length by the writer in an earlier study dealing with Jacob's struggles toward maturity. (3) That he loved Joseph deeply and preferred him above all his other sons is an important but self-evident aspect of our story.

What about Rachel, Joseph's mother? What sort of person was she? We meet her first as a shepherdess of her father's sheep. Thus, she is leading an active, outdoor life, facing responsibilities and the natural hardships of such a task. Although girls did occasionally perform work of this kind, it was generally considered a man's job.

Jacob's first meeting with Rachel was at the well, where she came to water her flock. He rolled away the heavy stone which covered the well and helped her with her task while a group of shepherds lolled nearby. One must assume that Rachel was generally able to protect herself from undesirable advances or teasing behavior of the rough shepherds whom she customarily met at the well. That unpleasant incidents

did occur in such settings is indicated by the experience of a group of shepherd girls at another time and place. They were the daughters of Jethro, the priest, whom Moses helped to protect from unruly shepherds when he came upon them in the desert on his flight from Egypt.

Rachel presents herself, therefore, as a sturdy and independent young woman. That she was not lacking in feminine charm and beauty is well attested by Jacob's immediate attraction to her and his "love at first sight."

Another instance which shows Rachel's resourcefulness and lack of timidity is revealed in the incident of the teraphim many years later. When Jacob, his wives and children, fled from the home of his father-in-law, Laban, taking with them all their flocks and possessions, Rachel also took the small household gods which belonged to her father. They were probably very important to her as a connecting link between the old home she was leaving and the new land to which she was going. (4) Laban pursued the party in great anger at their leaving him so unceremoniously. The loss of his gods added to his resentment and he accused Jacob of stealing them. Jacob, who was unaware of Rachel's deed, protested this and allowed Laban to search the encampment. Rachel hid the gods in the saddle-bags of a camel and sat down upon the saddle which was standing within the tent. She asked her father to excuse her from rising as "the manner of women was upon her." Rachel thus showed herself to be quick-witted and daring. Like Laban, she was not averse to resorting to deception when it suited her needs. We have no indication, however, that such behavior was typical. At any rate, one gets the impression that her superego was not painfully severe.

Rachel's older sister, Leah, became Jacob's first wife in consequence of Laban's deception. We can sympathize with Jacob as he lifted the veil of his bride and beheld the face of the weak-eyed Leah instead of the beloved and beautiful Rachel. He had worked seven years in payment for his bride, only to have the unloved Leah foisted upon him. Jacob married Rachel a week later and worked seven years longer

to pay for her. Fourteen years is a long time to work for a wife and is a tribute to Jacob's love for Rachel.

It is understandable that the relationship between the two sister-wives should have its difficulties. The competitive spirit was strong and manifested itself chiefly in the desire of each to produce as many sons as possible and thus prove herself a successful wife. In this contest, Leah is triumphant. After she has given birth to four sons and Rachel is still barren, the latter cries out to Jacob in despair, "Give me children or else I die." Jacob replies with understandable anger, which must also have contained elements of pain and disappointment, "Am I in God's stead who had withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?"

In her frustration, Rachel presents her handmaid, Bilhah to her husband as a substitute. The woman conceives and during the process of birth, Rachel holds Bilhah upon her knees. Through this ritual, the child is considered as Rachel's own. In this fashion, Rachel gets two sons by proxy, Dan and Naphtali.

The competitive spirit between the two wives continues, and when Leah notes that she is no longer conceiving, she gives her own handmaid, Zilpah to her husband. The concubine gives Jacob two more sons, Gad and Asher.

Leah's first-born son, Reuben, must have entered into the spirit of this contest. During the wheat harvest he went out into the field and found mandrakes, which he presented to his mother. It was believed that this plant had the magic property of being favorable to conception. Rachel pleads with Leah for some of the mandrakes and the latter drives a bargain with her sister. Rachel may have the mandrakes if she will send Jacob to sleep with Leah that evening. This incident indicates clearly how both wives accepted the fact that Jacob belonged to Rachel by virtue of his love for her.

Rachel's long period of barrenness may have had a psychogenic basis. Rebecca, Jacob's mother, came from the same family as Rachel, being Laban's sister. The two women resembled each other in character and perhaps in looks. Rachel may therefore have been a mother surrogate to

Jacob's unconscious, a factor which would help to explain his "love at first sight." Dr. Reik comments on this factor in his study of Jacob. (5) Rachel was the first woman Jacob met after he left his home and mother in a period of psychological stress. The Bible says that he asked for Rachel's hand in marriage almost immediately and offered to work for her seven years since he lacked the money to pay the bride-price as was customary in those days. We are told that the seven years seemed but a few days, so great was Jacob's love for her. This seems a little hard to understand. In the face of such great love, seven years would more likely seem an almost interminable time for a passionate young lover. But if Jacob was still to some degree under the influence of an Oedipal attachment to his mother, and Rachel was a mother-imago, then he would be in no haste for a mature sexual expression of his love. He would be content to enjoy a prolonged romantic relationship, which is akin to fore-pleasure on a pregenital level.

After Leah had given birth to seven children, six sons and a daughter, and her handmaid, Zilpah, two sons, and Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah, two sons, Rachel had her first child. Joseph was born in the seventh year of her marriage. One can imagine the joy of both parents over this long-awaited event. It is not surprising that Joseph became the favorite son of his father as well as the deeply-cherished child of his mother.

As Rachel's only son for a number of years, Joseph had no rival for his mother's affections. Actually, he never knew such rivalry even at a later age, for Rachel died when his younger brother Benjamin was born. His feelings for this brother, who was about six years younger, were very tender, as later events indicate.

Each wife had her own tent in which she lived with her children. It was divided into two parts, with one section reserved for Jacob. He lived in the tent of the favorite wife most of the time. Under this type of family structure, Joseph had a favored place. The tent of his mother must have provided an atmosphere much more relaxed and free from

tension than the tent of Leah, which was full of noisy siblings. Little time was actually spent within the tent but it provided a place of quiet and refuge for the young Joseph and opportunities for a closer and warmer relationship with his father. Rachel herself, as a secure and loved wife, must have had more spontaneous and unconflictful affection to bestow upon her son, whereas Leah, who felt herself hated, may have become embittered and hostile to some degree and thus less able to give her children a full measure of love.

Joseph, thus, in many ways, had a favored environment. His unrivaled possession of the mother as far as siblings were concerned and his father's favoritism must have given strong support to his ego development. As Freud once said, "A man who has been the indisputable favorite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a conqueror, that confidence of success that often induces real success." (6) A fulfilling experience of having been loved, cherished, and preferred by both parents must certainly have had a large share in the courage and confidence with which Joseph faced the ordeals and tribulations of his later life.

Joseph's childhood and youth were certainly not free from problems, as the biblical story makes clear. His favored position must have aroused envy and hatred among his brothers from earliest years. It seems likely that Joseph was exposed not only to the jealousy of Leah's sons, but of Leah also. The competitive spirit between Rachel and Leah must have strengthened the normal rivalry among the siblings. The children of the rival wife, forming a more or less consolidated group, would have found Joseph a convenient object for their hostility. Their feelings of jealousy and rejection must have gathered intensity through identification with their mother's jealousy and her inferior position in Jacob's love.

There was another factor which increased the enmity which Joseph aroused. He was endowed with qualities which made him genuinely superior to his brothers. We are told that he was "of beautiful form and fair to look upon." He certainly had exceptionally high intelligence, judging by his

later achievements. Thus he stood out among his brothers, more handsome, more gently nurtured, more intelligent and sensitive, as well as more favored by the father.

Joseph must have been quite vulnerable to the hostility of his brothers because of his youth and greater sensitivity. One of the most difficult situations to endure is to be one against many, particularly in relation to one's peers. Joseph was in this position among his brothers for a long time.

To be both superior and vulnerable is a fateful combination. The first factor arouses envy and the second makes it easy and satisfying for the envious to express their resentment through aggression. A certain type of competitive envy is one of the most common of human emotions, so much a part of human nature that Freud regards it as normal rather than neurotic. In fact, he looks with some suspicion upon those individuals who show a striking lack of such an emotion under provocative conditions. (7) Joseph's presence must have served as a constant unpleasant reminder to his brothers of his natural superiority and favored place in the family. Joseph, therefore, may have innocently contained within himself the factors which served constantly to ignite the hatred and aggression of his brothers.

The sheer force of the numbers arrayed against him must have increased Joseph's feelings of insecurity and fear. Some of his older brothers may also have represented threatening father-imagos to him, perhaps in the Oedipal situation. Actually, Reuben, the oldest, acted out such a role when he had a clandestine sexual relationship with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine, who had served as proxy to Jacob for Rachel herself. The fact that this occurred after the death of Rachel, when Bilhah probably acted as a mother substitute to Joseph, must have had a strong impact upon him. Perhaps it is not entirely accidental that it was Reuben who tried to save Joseph when the latter was threatened with death by his brothers at the time they sold him into slavery. Having displaced Jacob as the father on one occasion by possessing his concubine, Reuben may have identified with Jacob also in

developing a special fatherly protectiveness toward the young Joseph.

Joseph must have felt the loss of his mother keenly. He was probably only about six years old at the time, if one calculates the events of his childhood according to the more convincing of the two conflicting inferences in the Bible. (8) For Joseph was born in the fourteenth year of Jacob's sojourn with Laban, and the birth of his brother Benjamin, which was the cause of Rachel's death, occurred on the journey back to Canaan, six years later. After this tragic event, Joseph had only his father to look to for love and support. There was also the young Benjamin, who may have played an important role in Joseph's development by providing him with an additional object for his love and also offering a stimulus for developing feelings of tenderness and protectiveness.

Jacob must have been aware of the difficult position in which Joseph found himself and thus increased his own attentive love, giving Joseph the extra moral support he needed to endure the hostile feelings of his older brothers, but also fanning the flames of their anger.

Jacob is often criticized for showing so openly his preference for Joseph and thus stimulating jealousy and hate among his other children. Jacob may have had a close identification with Joseph and given him the love that he himself would have liked to receive from his own father, who favored Esau. Jacob's predilection for a "younger son" must have remained with him all his life, for in his old age, when he traveled down to Egypt to see Joseph again and met Joseph's children also, he bestowed the greater blessing upon the younger son, Ephraim, while Manasseh came off second best.

On a reality basis, however, it was considered customary for the head of a large family to have a favorite son. This role was generally occupied by the eldest male child of the favorite wife, which was Joseph's position. It was also the custom to present such a child with special gifts.

The well-known incident in which Jacob bestows upon Joseph a coat of many colors, evidently a garment much finer

than any of his brothers possessed, raised their anger to such a pitch that "they could not speak peaceably unto him." Regardless of the custom of the times, their reaction is indeed humanly understandable.

We are told that as a youth of seventeen, Joseph fed the flock with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of of Zilpah, children of his father's concubines. Biblical commentary indicates that the sons of Leah showed contempt for Joseph by not associating with him. It may be, however, that Jacob thought it safer to put him with the sons of the concubines who would have more fear and respect for Joseph and would therefore be less likely to do him harm.

Joseph's behavior toward his brothers while in the field seems far from commendable. The Bible, with its customary frankness, says that Joseph brought evil reports of his brothers to his father. Here the youth was acting in that most unadmirable of roles—a tale-bearer. What these reports were, we are not told. It seems likely that they included accounts of mistreatment and hostility toward himself. It may well be that Joseph needed the support and comfort of his father on a reality basis in the difficulties that faced him.

What other indications do we have of the way that Joseph actually conducted himself toward his brothers? There was evidently a certain arrogance in his manner which must have served to irritate them considerably. This arrogance is clearly seen in the manner in which he relates his dreams to them, as well as in the content of the dreams. There is nothing cringing or submissive about the way he says to them, 'Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: for behold we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves came round about and bowed to my sheaf.' And his brethren said to him, 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us?' And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed yet another dream: and behold, the sun and the moon, and eleven stars bowed down to me.' And he told it to his father and to his breth-

ren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him: 'What is this dream that thou has dreamed. Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down to thee to the earth?' And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in his mind."

The manifest content of these dreams seems clear enough. They are child-like in their simple allegorical meaning. But the unconscious purpose of the dreams can be understood when they are seen not only as the ambitions of an adolescent youth in a competitive struggle with his brothers, but also as a defense against anxiety in relation to these hostile siblings. Not only is Joseph unafraid of his brothers, the dream says reassuringly; they are actually submissive to him. These two aspects are brought out interestingly in the wording, "Lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves came round about and bowed down to my sheaf." The first action is one of Joseph's own power, expressed in symbolic terms of sexual potency. Joseph is as powerful as his older and stronger brothers, for his sheaf also arose and stood upright. The next bit of action comes from his brothers. Not only is Joseph strong and powerful, but he controls and rules over his brothers, who are submissive to him.

In the second dream, Joseph includes the parental imagos too, figures which certainly had not been threatening to him on a reality basis. In fact, Rachel was probably no longer alive at this time. Including her in the dream may have contained a further element of denial and wish-fulfillment. Not only was his mother still alive but she was subject to his control. Thus Joseph may have been expressing how great was his need to be powerful — so powerful that he could even rule over father and mother. The dreams may therefore indicate how strong were his repressed feelings of fear and insecurity and his consequent need for defense against the awareness of such painful feelings, together with a wish for mastery of the situation. His arrogant manner may also have been largely defensive in its purpose, serving to conceal his feelings of weakness not only from his brothers but from his own conscious ego. (9)

That the brothers reacted to the dreams with anger and hostility shows that they took quite seriously the threat that Joseph might some day rule over them. It was an acknowledgement of his superiority and favored position. One gets the feeling, however, that Jacob's rebuke was more for the sake of family discipline than because of any real annoyance on his part, for he "kept the saying in his mind," while "the brothers envied him." That the brothers could feel envy in response to a dream also indicates the significance that dreams had in those days as a source of prophetic revelation.

The climax of the brothers' hostility to Joseph is reached in the fateful episode that leads to his being sold as a slave. Joseph is sent by his father to find out if all was well with his brothers and the flocks. They had been away for some time, pasturing the sheep at a considerable distance from the home site. It is probable that Joseph was not sent with his brothers originally because their absence was to be a prolonged one. However, when Jacob became anxious over the delayed return, he sent Joseph to look for them. One may wonder why Joseph set out on this rather arduous journey wearing his beautiful coat of many colors. The youth must have possessed a simpler garment more suited to his task. Why then did he choose to flaunt this coat before the hostile eyes of his brothers at a time when he was far from the safety of his father's house? If Joseph was afraid of his brothers, he may have worn the coat as a form of reassurance for himself and as a warning to his brothers that he was "cloaked" with his father's love and they should therefore not dare to molest him. Certainly he would not have wished to arouse their jealous hate at a time when he was in such a defenseless position. On another level, in donning the cloak associated with his father, Joseph "became" the father, thus assuming the omnipotence and invulnerability accompanying this role. (12) It is possible, of course, that he was not fully aware of the intensity of their hatred. But on an unconscious level he must have known, although the fact that he put himself into such an exposed position indicates a repression of this awareness. It is characteristic of defensive be-

havior that it often misjudges reality. The appearance of Joseph, who had been spared the hardships of a long sojourn in the fields, appearing now in his fine raiment and probably covering his uneasiness with an arrogant manner, must have aroused their hostility to a high pitch. Even the sight of him in the distance stirred them to angry mutterings. "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say: An evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.'"

Reuben, the oldest, dissuades them from acting out this wish and they compromise by stripping him of his coat and casting him into a dry pit. There is a vast distance between the wish to kill and the actual performance of such a deed. Reuben's suggestion did not meet with opposition. But the wish to get rid of Joseph must have been very strong and the temptation to do so while they were far from Jacob's presence must have strengthened their determination. They act readily, therefore, upon Judah's suggestion to sell him as a slave to a passing caravan which was on its way to Egypt.

The fact that Jacob does not express any suspicion that the brothers might have done physical violence to Joseph may be a further indication that they actually would not have been capable of such a crime. They bring their father Joseph's coat, dipped in the blood of a goat, and allow him to draw his own conclusion that an evil beast has without doubt torn him to pieces and devoured him. The distraught father is overcome with grief and refuses to be comforted, declaring that he would go down to his grave mourning for his son.

The sudden violent change in his life situation was indeed a challenge to Joseph's ego strength. The daring and cruelty of his brothers in treating him so harshly must have had tremendous impact upon him. No longer could he repress awareness of their aggression, brutality, and hatred toward him. His father's protection was no longer available. He was alone in the world for the first time in his life, in the hands of strangers, an object for the slave market of Egypt.

The journey from Dothan to Egypt took a number of days. Joseph had an opportunity to gather his strength and prepare himself for what might be awaiting him.

Joseph's experiences in Egypt indicate clearly that he responded to his new situation with strength and resolution, even under the most trying circumstances. His Egyptian master, Potiphar, an officer in the household of Pharaoh, was so impressed with Joseph's abilities that he appointed the Hebrew slave overseer of his entire household and left its management entirely in his hands. We are told that the affairs of Potiphar, both in the house and in the field, prospered exceedingly under Joseph's able management. Thus the youth faced the first crucial test of his new life. He was able to meet a sudden harsh ordeal, the separation from a loved parent and a familiar way of life, and the change to a position of slavery in a strange land.

That Joseph was able to make this adaptation and to do so with phenomenal success indicates a strong ego. Joseph had faith in himself and was not overwhelmed by his new circumstances, painful though they must have been at first. The child who had been accepted and loved by both his parents had developed enough inner strength to meet the challenge of his young adulthood. The adolescent dreams of superiority were an indication of the will to overcome and to triumph over obstacles. At that time, the obstacles had been his brothers. Now there were other battles to fight, and Joseph could use satisfying means in reality rather than dreams. On another level, he must also have been struggling to overcome his brothers again. They had placed him in this new situation in an effort to defeat him. There was no sign of masochism in Joseph. He had a healthy wish to succeed and perhaps to discomfit those who wanted to destroy him. Joseph, the dreamer, was also a man of action.

The famous episode with Potiphar's wife revealed Joseph's basic integrity. He not only had a strong ego but a well-formed superego. Joseph refused to yield to the woman's importunities to be her lover, explaining that his duty was to the master who had placed him in a position of trust.

Potiphar, who had befriended him and made him a favorite, must also have been a father-imago to the youth. Potiphar's wife, therefore, would be doubly forbidden, not only out of loyalty to the master but because she too was probably a parental figure. In connection with this situation, Joseph may have had some memories of the wrath that was aroused in Jacob when Reuben slept with Bilhah, the concubine. At any rate, Joseph was able to resist this sexual temptation. Even more ego strength must have been needed to face the threatening consequences of his non-cooperation, for he must have known that he would arouse the woman's anger and enmity by daring to refuse her favors. Her approach to him was in the form of a command, ordering him to do her bidding. When he refused, she became even more aggressive, catching hold of his garment and repeating her order, "Lie with me." She was treating him as a servant. Joseph's refusal on a high moral and religious plane must have intensified her anger and need for revenge. He, a Hebrew slave, was putting her to shame, not only by a sexual rejection but by revealing more nobility of character than she, an Egyptian noblewoman, possessed. She punished him by a neat reversal of the situation, charging him with the deed which she herself had wished to commit.

That Joseph's fate was not even worse when the spurned lady bitterly accused him before her husband of trying to attack her sexually is significant of the true regard in which Potiphar held Joseph. The officer of Pharaoh must also have understood something of his wife's true character and therefore acted with leniency toward Joseph. Had Potiphar really believed Joseph guilty of a wanton attack upon the lady, the sentence would surely have been death for the presumptuous slave.

Joseph was removed from his position and thrown into prison. Again he was hurled from the top to the bottom of the ladder. Again he was a seemingly innocent victim of other people's baser impulses. The two factors that served to arouse his brothers' hatred may have operated here too. Joseph was genuinely superior and at the same time in a

vulnerable position. It may well be that Potiphar's wife was not only attracted by the handsome youth but also irritated by his manner, which may have expressed the defensive arrogance retained from earlier years. This quality, which would convey to others a narcissistic over-evaluation of himself and a subtle rejection of others, would certainly tend to elicit envy and hatred.

Joseph in prison once more shows an acceptance of a difficult situation and makes efforts to improve it. Once more he wins the favor of his superior and is given special tasks and privileges. Here, again, Joseph shows faith in a father-imago. He feels himself capable of winning approval by practicing the virtues of hard work and loyalty which his father taught him. Because he had confidence in himself and his abilities, others also had confidence in him.

The next change in Joseph's life situation was brought about by his interest in dreams. He who had dreams of his own and understood his own wishes so well, was also gifted in understanding the dreams of others. He interprets the dreams of two other prisoners, the baker and the butler, who had served Pharaoh himself. His interpretation is verified. As he predicted, the baker is hanged and the butler is restored to his position in the palace. One might infer that the baker and the butler each knew unconsciously what his fate would be on the basis of his actual guilt and how he stood in the graces of Pharaoh.

Although Joseph implores the butler to remember him, the latter fails to do so until Pharaoh himself has a dream which baffles the wise men of his court. Then the butler recalls Joseph, who had interpreted his own dream so successfully. The Hebrew slave is brought before Pharaoh and at the end of the interview finds himself Viceroy of Egypt, second in power to Pharaoh himself. His understanding of dreams and his self-confidence have served Joseph well.

All the dreams in the Joseph story have a certain allegorical quality, significant of the attitude toward dreams in those ancient times when they were regarded as veiled pronouncements of future events.

Joseph becomes phenomenally successful in his new role. Again he uses his very real abilities and his capacity for hard work to consolidate his position. His success, therefore, cannot be said to be based on fortuitous circumstances alone. For the rest of his life, Joseph remains in Pharaoh's favor. This is no small achievement when one considers how fickle were the moods of those mighty potentates.

The story of how Joseph meets his brothers in Egypt is a dramatic one and reveals the degree of maturity which Joseph has attained by this time. His handling of the situation indicates clearly two qualities of character — a capacity for controlled behavior on an ego level and also the ability to give free, uninhibited expression to his warm, positive feelings.

Joseph's first reaction to his brothers is an understandable one of anger and "he spoke roughly with them," pretending not to know them. Being able to carry out such a pretense until the moment he deemed suitable to reveal himself is an example of ego control. His rough treatment probably expressed some of his real feelings and as such was a healthy acknowledgement of his resentment. He no longer repressed his awareness of their hostility in accordance with what seems to have been an earlier pattern. He is thus able to change his mode of behavior to fit a changed reality. This flexibility is one of the important signs of emotional health. (10)

Joseph might have behaved otherwise in his dealings with his brothers. His first reaction might have been one of great anger and a desire to punish them. But Joseph evidently had a greater need for love than for revenge and this fact may be an important key to the understanding of his character. Moreover, Joseph was leading a life of genuine fulfillment and could therefore find it easier to be tolerant and forgiving. The many satisfactions he enjoyed must have blunted his anger and narcissistic hurt long ago. Joseph was married to a woman of Egyptian nobility and had two sons. Thus in both his private and public life he had important sources of satisfaction. That a lack remained, however, and

that his feelings were still involved in childhood ties and traumas, as indeed was inevitable, is indicated by the emotion which the reunion with his brothers evoked in him as revealed in later developments.

Another possible reaction to Joseph's meeting with his brothers might have been one of immediate forgiveness in his joy at seeing again the familiar figures associated with his childhood and the home he must have missed so much. Such a response might also have seemed a nobler one than the attitude he actually took at the first encounter. But this would probably have indicated a continued repression of his first real feelings, his fear of them and his anger at their cruelty. Or else such an attitude would have revealed a kind of saintliness which would certainly be suspect when evaluated in terms of emotional health.

From the point of view of dramatic suspense, the story as it actually unfolds in a series of episodes leading to a climax is an example of superb storytelling. However, we are concerned here only with the psychological aspects of Joseph's personality even though the editors of the Bible may have been motivated by an unconscious need to increase the dramatic quality of the narrative.

Joseph takes his brothers into custody on the charge that they are spies. He learns inadvertently that they are suffering from a sense of guilt because of their treatment of him long ago and they regard their present plight as a just punishment for this sin. His strategy of forcing them to bring Benjamin with them on their next trip serves both the purpose of satisfying his tender longing to see his younger brother again and also of testing the others to see if they have really amended their ways. He holds Simeon as hostage and sends the others on their way, their sacks filled with grain. He chooses Simeon, the second oldest, instead of Reuben because the latter had interceded for him at the crucial period when he was sold into slavery.

The second meeting with the brothers shows Joseph's tender feelings in the ascendancy. When he beholds Benjamin, he is moved to tears. But he controls his feelings until

he can go into a separate chamber and weep unobserved. Then he washes his face and returns. This is a moving example of Joseph's spontaneous tenderness controlled on an ego level. There must have been a strong impulse to reveal himself to his brothers at this time. What a fitting retribution for what he had suffered at their hands! His dreams had literally become true and they were now bowing humbly before him.

But Joseph no longer seemed to need this acknowledgment of his superior position and strength. This should be good proof that his adolescent dreams were largely defensive rather than narcissistic. The fact that Joseph is not in haste to reveal his true identity shows his ability to postpone satisfaction and is thus a further indication of his ego strength. He treats his brothers well, serving them a generous repast as guests in his own home, giving them gifts of clothing, and filling their sacks with grain.

The severest ordeal to which Joseph puts his brothers is described in the well-known incident of the silver goblet which he causes to be put into Benjamin's sack of grain and which leads to the brothers being overtaken on their journey by the guards of Joseph. The brothers might have abandoned Benjamin to his fate and continued on their way but they did not. All returned with him and appeared before Joseph once more. Joseph's decision to keep Benjamin as a slave and Judah's dramatic intercession for the younger man leads to the climax of the story. The brothers prove beyond doubt that they have truly changed. Judah's moving plea which shows such a strong identification with his father Jacob's sorrow should any harm befall Benjamin indicates emotional growth on the part of Judah. It was he and Reuben who had tried to save Joseph from his fate at an earlier time but with far less intensity of effort than they now displayed. Now Judah is ready for a real sacrifice to have his brother.

Joseph is deeply moved and can no longer restrain himself. Still, before giving free expression to his emotions, he orders the servants to leave the room. Then he wept aloud —

so loudly that "the Egyptians heard and the house of Pharaoh heard." The control of this strong man finally broke in the grip of a powerful emotion. He did not reveal himself in a mood of narcissistic triumph but in an outburst of love and of longing that gives one of the few indications of the loneliness and homesickness that Joseph must have endured during those many years in an alien land. His first words to his brothers are, "'I am Joseph — doth my father yet live?'" His first concern was for the beloved parent of his childhood. Even though he had several previous reports that Jacob was alive, he asked it now, not as the Viceroy of Egypt inquiring about a stranger and therefore not sure of receiving a truthful answer, but as a son seeking his father.

The sudden dramatic revelation frightens the brothers and immobilizes them. They are unable to answer. Then Joseph shows his true compassion, speaking with a moving simplicity and drawing them closer to him with the words, "'Come near me, I pray you.' And they came near. And he said, 'I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.'"

Only after he has sustained and comforted them with this obvious rationalization and told them of his plans to bring them all to Egypt does he allow himself the satisfaction of saying, "'And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and all that ye have seen,'" adding immediately, "'and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither,'" as if his glory might be a further inducement to bring Jacob on the long journey from Canaan to Egypt. It is interesting at this point to note that when Jacob hears all this marvelous tale about Joseph and the greatness he has attained, the father's response is simple and to the point. He

says, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.'" It was Joseph, his son, he yearned for, not the Viceroy of Egypt.

Joseph and his brothers kiss each other and fall upon each other's necks and weep at the hour of their reunion. There is a yielding to emotion that must have been rare in the lives of these rough shepherds of Canaan. It certainly was initiated by the outgoing warmth and tender feelings of Joseph himself. This high emotional tone, certainly justified by the circumstances, is maintained to the end of the story. Joseph's feelings are evidently contagious and even Pharaoh and his household are drawn into the mood of this drama. He encourages and supports Joseph in the plan of sending for the entire clan of Israel and settling them in Egypt.

One of the signs of true maturity that Joseph revealed during his sojourn in Egypt was his acceptance of himself. Although he was an alien in the land and thus looked down upon by the Egyptians, Joseph's sense of self-esteem evidently remained high. He made no attempt to conceal his background or to change his religion. When his brothers appear in their rough shepherd clothes, Joseph reveals no sense of shame or inferiority, even though herdsmen were regarded as an inferior caste in Egypt. He claims them lovingly as his brothers and makes arrangements for all of the family to come to Egypt and settle there, even securing the cooperation of Pharaoh in this project. When Jacob arrives, Joseph hastens to meet him. He even arranges an audience with Pharaoh for Jacob and five of the brothers. The white-haired Jacob, at the venerable age of a hundred and thirty, speaks to Pharaoh with dignity, and the mighty ruler of Egypt bows his head to receive the blessing of the patriarch of Israel.

Such inner security and self-acceptance on the part of Joseph reveal a personality that functions with intrapsychic harmony. When Joseph was so abruptly separated from his father, the youth brought with him an internalized image of a strong, kindly, protective father-imago, the influence

of a matured and spiritualized Jacob. The latter had to go through a good deal of struggle in his own life-time to achieve this spiritual maturity because he himself had to overcome the handicap of a weak father-imago. The Bible dwells considerably upon Jacob's relationship with God and the promises that God holds out to him if he proves himself worthy. It deals with Jacob's striving to achieve this goal. In contrast, there is very little in the story of Joseph about this struggle between himself and God. On the contrary, there is the simple, quiet assertion when Joseph enters Egypt and on subsequent occasions that God was with him. When he is called upon to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph says confidently, "God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

A large part of Joseph's strength came from this inner harmony, his trust in a beneficent God Who was always with him. Perhaps nothing attests more fully to the high degree of maturity which Jacob finally reached in his later years than this strong but kindly superego which his own personality made possible in his beloved son.

Joseph's true maturity is once more manifested after the death of his father when his brothers, still suffering from guilt and insecurity, fear that Joseph might now take a belated revenge. They plead again for his forgiveness, saying that this was Jacob's wish. Joseph's eyes fill with tears as he replies, 'Fear not; for am I in the place of God?' The Talmud comments that Joseph wept at this point because his brothers showed their distrust of him and must have felt that he hated them. (11) This is an astute observation and one must conclude that they were unable to understand his capacity to forgive and to love.

Joseph's strong sense of self-identity is brought out clearly at the time of his death, when his last request is that his bones should eventually be brought to Canaan and buried there with his fathers.

The personality of Joseph, seen in terms of his early environment and later patterns of behavior seems to have a definite psychological unity. Whether this was brought about because the Joseph stories have a historical basis or

because they are the product of a people who had a strong, intuitive understanding of personality development is difficult to say, of course. Perhaps both factors are involved.

It is not accidental, however, that the people of Israel had this true perception of human conduct since their group ideals were directed toward ethical values. Their heroes were not the mythical figures common among other peoples of antiquity, who fought with gods or dreaded monsters. The Hebrew heroes of the Bible are very human people who struggle with their own inner weaknesses. Perhaps this factor explains the continued significance of these personalities. This struggle is the universal one of every human being toward maturity. The Hebrews did not need to idealize their heroes since it was in the striving to attain the ideal that the values lay. The appeal of the Joseph stories may be inherent to a large degree in this human quality of struggle and achievement.

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How We Create "Fathers" and Make Them "Sons"

by

Harold Feldman

I.

He that acknowledges the Son
has the Father also.

I John, II, 23.

The severe criticism which Otto Rank made of Freud's theory of the leader is based on the idea that the Son and not the Father is the basis of leadership. There is no lack of evidence to prove the strong element of truth in that idea. But our conclusion from the histories of Heroes and Great Men would be that the interaction of Son and Father elements is a necessary feature of every leader, and that it is the relative proportion of the two elements which determines whether the leader under consideration is a Hero or a "Great Man." The Hero is primarily a son. The Great Man is primarily a father. The error in Rank's thinking was that he approached the leader problem entirely from the viewpoint of the rebel Hero. In his book *Modern Education*, he wrote: (1) "Freud explained the concept of God as an exalted father-image which he actually identified with the concept of leader-father," and then remarked in a footnote: "Freud has in his 'Group Psychology' referred in the appendix to the hero problem raised by me, which is still the clearest personification, not only of the leader concept, but also of the individualistic God, and cannot be explained from the father psychology but rather from that of the rebellious son."

It is an old story that the children of God created Him in their image. But what Rank did not admit was that *the image they created and worshipped was a father-image.*

How sons create a Father in their own image is illustrated by the growth of the Super-ego. In developing a theory of what is popularly called the unconscious conscience, Freud and his followers noted that it was created out of parental commands and admonitions of all kinds which are then treated as a child's own. When the will of the parent or parent-surrogate has, in some form, become the child's own will, the conscience or Super-ego is established. "The educator, *as the child sees him*, tinged with the child's own *projected* aggression, not the *real* educator is introjected." *The parents' projected image, mentally internalized by the child in a distorted form, is the basis of the inner conscience.* This internalized educator sets up an Ego Ideal which is not an image of the actual parent but, as Bergler describes it, "an unconscious glorified picture" of the child himself as he imagines his parent and as he desires to become. This is the image which is the psychological divining rod of leadership, by which all succeeding father-images are discovered. Transferred to group psychology, it confirms Hegel's dictum that kings are kings only because subjects are subjects.

This process is further modified in community life. Any community can be divided into leaders and followers, but this is no actual division, of course, between fathers and children. It is an assumption of every community that all of its active citizens are physically and mentally past puberty and presumably mature. The real children are unable to do active service for the community and are denied a part in communal responsibilities. The Community, and also the State, are therefore primarily *the fathers, organized as a union of the brothers*. Such an organization came into existence with the beginnings of humanity and was, we imagine, dedicated on the murder of the original ape-leader. The memory of this epoch of murder and the recurrence of the motives which led to it are probably the basis of the incest prohibition and its social contract. Man's innate lack of confidence in his ability to govern himself may be traced to such historical traumata which recur in every generation and which are internalized in the mass of mankind as a psycho-

logical guilt-factor. That guilt is further reinforced by the real difficulties of working and living in nature. As a result, the adult man, the biological father, is impelled to seek social substitutes for the old parental protectors and providers whom, as a child, he loved and hated. The continual creation of father-images becomes a necessity of social existence. The insecure fathers of the community seek out one of their fellows before whom they may behave like sons again. Contradictory as it may seem, such a father-image has, in the past, become most necessary when the common people have destroyed the incumbent father-images and tried to do without any at all. Every great social change of the past has shown a tendency to restore, even if only momentarily, the old "union of the brothers" as it existed after the primal parricide and before the definite establishment of the first father-image.

What happens to the obsolete "fathers" who are regularly supplanted by the new father-images? Sometimes they disappear or disintegrate or are incorporated into the new image. Sometimes they deteriorate into virtually comic figures. This is what happens in the cases of Zeus and King Arthur. Arthur is supposed by some scholars to have been a pagan deity. After the conversion to Christianity, he was treated in myths as an anti-ecclesiastical demon who was in constant trouble with the saints. He finally achieved respectability as an ever-victorious warrior who even subjugated Western Europe. Then the sprites and fairies of heathendom became attached to his court as Christian knights and ladies while he gradually changed into a holy patriarch. The myth leaves him in the end as a defeated cuckold and a receiver of souls in heaven. Literary scholars call this an example of "epic degeneration." Another would be Robin Hood whom we see repeatedly trounced by those who later join his band. In fact, Robin sometimes offers his mistress to the newcomer as a token of his defeat. King Arthur and Robin Hood both show the concessions which myth makes to parricidal and incest wishes when the father-image is treated as leader of a band of brothers, *primus inter pares*.

A most interesting development is shown by those father-images who, on dethronement, become son-images. For instance, Charles I of England was tried and beheaded by his revolutionary "sons." In his place rose the new father-image of Cromwell. Then the old father-image of Charles, castrated as it were by dethronement and decapitation, becomes a kind of image of the castrated son.

He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene
Nor called the gods with vulgar spite
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed. (3)

Two factors are invested in the father-image which make it susceptible of transformation into a son-image. On the one hand, to these kings of men is attributed an omnipotence, paralleled only by the megalomaniac notions of an infant, which invites attack and must be damaged by any reality-testing. The bigger they are, the harder they fall. On the other hand, there is the "castration" process. They say that the gods who are replaced by new gods become the devils and sprites of the new religion. Thus the Devil, the old antiquated god, survives in the form of Lucifer, the rebellious son of God, a rebel without a cause.

The leaders of important revolutions are Great Men. The leaders of doomed rebellions are Heroes. The first are "fathers." The second are "sons." The act of revolution enlists a tremendous degree of rebellious, destructive energy and is always directed against some existing authority. In this sense, it recalls the prototype of rebellion, the rebellion of son against father. But a successful revolt means that the incumbent "father" was too weak to retain his power. Or, like Old Man Karamazov or Francesco Cenci, he had degenerated to the stage of using paternal authority to gratify infantile cravings. The removal of leaders also means that the "sons" have matured sufficiently to wield effectively the powers that were exercised by the "father." To this extent,

the "son" has become in fact a "father." However it is a well-known fact that revolutions, even the most successful ones, have a strong tendency to turn on themselves. The guilt feeling of the rebellious son does not disappear after he has earned the right to fatherhood and thus frequently provokes some kind of "Restoration." The innovator faces his enemy with the feelings expressed by Shelley:

We
Are now, no more, as once, parent and child,
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed;
. But that word parricide,
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

Against this tendency, several defenses are set up, among which one peculiar mechanism deserves special study. The Son rebels and overthrows the Father but not in his own name. He attacks Father in the name of the Grandfather.

If the American colonists rebelled against King George, it was because the king had betrayed the charters of their ancestors. It was in defense of the anti-slavery cause that the humorist Petroleum V. Nasby made his famous remark that "we are all descended from grandfathers." The Sons appeal to the traditions of the Grandfather, the Pilgrims, William Penn, etc. The great changes in the church were never innovations, Heaven forbid. They only restored the purity of the "primitive church." The Sons can attack the Holy Father in Rome because they raise the banner of the earlier Fathers and the Apostles. Zeus himself, when he sought to establish his power over Kronos, his father, was aided by his grandfather Uranus. The new rulers try to anticipate what looks like an inevitable Restoration by presenting their revolutionary deed as itself a restoration. In this we can recognize another subtle distinction between the Great Man and the Hero. The Hero conceals a longing for the old in colorful, dramatic, novel ways. The Great Man tries to present his real change as though it were something old.

II.

He shall cut off the spirit of
princes. He is terrible to the
kings of the earth.

Psalm 76.

It should be remembered that Rank's objection to Freud's theory of the leader developed from a lifelong preoccupation with mythology and hero-literature. Like his predecessor Carl Jung, Rank did not appreciate how far mythology tends to reverse the real state of affairs. Real inner needs continually provoke the creation of father-images and ultimately, in this way, give rise to religion. Mythology, on the contrary, tends to transform its characters into son-images. The processes and counter-processes that are reflected in mythology can become quite confusing as in the case of the old Germanic epics where Odin is described in one place as a descendant of Thor and later as the father of Thor. But this is in keeping with the religious nature of the myth. Religion almost always has a beginning or a creation of the universe and a universal creating father. It must tend, therefore, to reduce all other father-images (as rivals) into son-images. *Deo soli gloria*. And for many a man, devotion to the Father in heaven is an excuse to desert, attack, and belittle the father on earth. Rank, like Jung, was disposed to see in mythology a mere translation of psychological facts into special symbolic terms, not a reversal and distortion of the basic phenomena. Psychology, as a result, became in their hands a translation of religious ideas into psychoanalytical terminology, and lost its character as a natural science.

Mythology, as religion, further depreciates the father-images of history by its inherent hostility to man's attempts to alter nature and human nature, to create new life. In religion, curiosity about nature and desires to mold it closer to the heart's desire are worse than blasphemy. The original sin was eating an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. Prometheus suffers the tortures of the damned for bringing the secret of light to mankind. Within any one religion, the

aspiring father-image of history is demoted to son status and is punished just because it is a father-image.

But since each religion itself developed in hostility to a parent faith, each religion necessarily shows compromise features, more or less pronounced depending on how thorough the innovation was. In Mohammedanism, the old heathen gods are reduced to son-devils or son-angels. Its historic father-images are separated from the one god by a considerable distance. There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed, a true father-image, is only his prophet and, add the Shi-ites, Ali was his lieutenant. Christianity produced very different results because its origin was so different. Mohammed had to replace a polytheistic heathendom by a strict monotheism; Christ, on the other hand, tries to replace a strict monotheism by a family of gods. He was only partially successful. The Christians could only make their father-image into a God by submitting him as a punished son of God. However, in the form of the Triune God, Christ really becomes the Father God himself by playing the part of the inseparable son contained within the father. In his book on *Masochism in Modern Man*, Reik showed the sadistic fantasies which operate behind the Son-God's apparent filial submission to the father. Christianity, like other religions, shows its God to be a father-image by the cruelty and intolerance with which it tends to treat unbelievers. ("He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." *Mark* xvi, 16).

Judaism, because of its obsessional monotheism, conceals many of its compromises. The patriarch Jacob wrestled with God, defeated Him, and virtually assumed his name. Freud's theory that Moses was an alien leader of the Jews whom they killed is complemented by an earlier thesis of Theodor Reik (4) in a way that supports our view. He suggested that the original god of the Jews was a horned animal totem, like the bull or the ram, and when Moses came down from Mount Sinai crowned with the horns of deity, it meant that he had assumed a kind of godship himself. The worshippers of what is later called a "golden calf" then

murdered Moses, but afterwards altered their religion into a purer monotheism. In the monotheistic compromise, not the undoubted father-image of Moses is emphasized, but a part of him is incorporated into the deity. The son-hero features of Moses are stressed — the birth myth, the mission from God, and the final failure to gain entrance into the Promised Land. To the deity is then transferred Moses' Ten Commandments, his eye-for-an-eye morality, his vindictiveness, revengefulness, impatience, and suppression of rebellion by stern force. In this sense, the sin of the father is visited upon the children in the form of myth. The Jews set up further safeguards against hero-worship when they devoted particular attention to the frailties and crimes of their traditional leaders. Thus their outstanding hero is a demoted father-image from whose seed the Messiah was ultimately to come, yet he is portrayed as an adulterer, murderer, and traitor.

We see something similar in the case of many ancient classical myths. As Otto Rank and later Lord Raglan clearly proved, the myths about heroes, gods, and great men of ancient times are remarkably alike. They are much less history than sexual fantasy and ritual. Their subjects are always born in a very unusual way, illegitimate, divine, and connected with some kind of dire prophecy. The prodigy is often exposed to die and then adopted in a kind of rebirth by others, usually a mother-substitute. The boy grows up and realizes directly or indirectly the incest and parricide which had been prophecied for him. His life is marked by wandering adventures.

But neither Rank nor Raglan took cognizance of a certain division within the typical myths. The heroes, gods, and great men whom they adduce as examples and whom they regard as belonging to one category of psychic creation actually differ among themselves in one important respect. We see that some of the myths are about great rulers and lawgivers, while the rest concern heroes of adventure who, if they ever do attain a kingdom, rule insignificantly and uneventfully. We may say that one group consists of ad-

venturers of singular prowess who sometimes become rulers of kingdoms *other than those they were born to*, and of whose reigns little or nothing is told. The other group contains godlike figures who are granted similar birth and deaths but who usually become kings in succession to their fathers. These furthermore preside over the founding of great institutions, promulgate basic law codes, preach a new ethics, and rule wisely. In other words, we here confront two different stages in the reduction of a father-image by mythology, in one of which the Great Man element remains prominent.

Consider the following examples:

Group I: (1) Hercules is the son of Amphytrion, king of Thebes in Boeotia. He loses the right to rule because his brother Eurystheus has a prior right. Hercules is condemned to serve Eurystheus for twelve years. He tries to win a kingdom in Oechalia but is thwarted again, and again condemned to labor as a servant. Although a slayer of kings and a conqueror of kingdom, Hercules never becomes a king himself. The recurrence of the number twelve in the Hercules stories suggests that he was a Sun-God reduced to heroic hard times.

(2) Perseus (allegedly the son of Zeus although one suspects an incestuous tie between his mother and grandfather) leaves Argos after accidentally killing his grandfather Acrisius. He hands the kingdom over to Megapenthes who, in turn, makes Perseus ruler of Tiryns in exchange. His reign in Tiryns is uneventful.

(3) Jason is the son of Aeson, king of Ioleus. He avenges his father's death by boiling his uncle in a cauldron but, instead of seizing the throne, he leaves and marries the daughter of the king of Corinth. Medea's magic fire kills the king and Jason dies by suicide like another Hamlet who can only revenge where he cannot rule.

(4) Bellerophon is the son of Glaucus, king of Corinth. He kills Beleris and flees to Argos. There he is ardently wooed by the king's wife whom he rebuffs. She then accuses our Joseph of making improper advances. He

is sent to Lycia to be killed but the King of Lycia finds it hopeless to try to kill him and instead gives him his daughter and makes him his successor. We are told nothing of his reign.

(5) Pelops, son of Tantalus, king of Phrygia, is expelled from his home and marries the daughter of King Oenomaus of Pisa in Elis.

(6) Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, abandons his native kingdom of Phthia after the Trojan War and settles in Epirus where he is the mythical ancestor of the kings of the Molossi. He is killed and his wife taken by Orestes.

(7) Achilles dies in the Trojan War fighting for a king against whom he bore a deep grudge.

(8) Menelaus, younger brother of Agamemnon, became King of Sparta by the wish of his father-in-law Tyndareus.

Group II (1) Theseus succeeds his father Aegeus as king of Attica. His father committed suicide because he thought his son had been killed in the adventure of the Minotaur. Theseus organized the city of Athens as a democracy, giving up his royal power in the process.

(2) Romulus succeeds his father Numiter after a reconciliation between the two. He founded Rome and, like Theseus, organized his city into political classes. He promulgated laws about marriage and the punishment of murder; he abolished monarchy in his native land of Alba.

(3) Dionysus, son of Zeus, becomes a god also, and to him is attributed the arts of winery and civilization. He is a great lawgiver and a lover of peace. With his mother, he finally ascended to Olympus.

(4) Apollo is another divine son of Zeus and, in a sense, he succeeds his father by becoming a Sun-God. He is also the god of penalties, prophecy, song, and music; he is a founder of cities and constitutions.

(5) Asclepius is the son of Apollo. Raised by Chiron to be a master of the healing art, he became the god of medicine and is said to have been killed by Zeus

for fear that men might evade death through his knowledge.

(6) Oedipus, driven from his native city because of a prophecy that he would some day commit both parricide and incest, realizes both prophecies unknowingly and succeeds his father Laius as king of Thebes. He saves his city from disasters and wins fame for righteousness. The father-image is clear in Homer where he continues to rule, but in the later versions, he goes into exile.

(7) Lycurgus, son of the king of Sparta, refused to accept his rightful kingdom after the new queen, his aunt, gave birth to a boy. Rumor alleged she was his mistress. He left Sparta but returned to have his country from anarchy. He reorganized the system of property distribution, set up a new civil and military constitution, and then left in voluntary exile.

(8) Aeneas, son of King Anchises of Dardanus, rescues his father from burning Troy and buries him in Sicily. He founds Lavinium and becomes the ruler of both Trojans and Aborigines on the death of his father-in-law, Latinus. Here we see the two rules of succession. Aeneas succeeds both his father and his father-in-law.

The difference illustrated here is not only significant for the study of what constitutes heroes and great men but possibly reflects the influence of two different historical eras as well. The Great Man who succeeds his father, who founds cities and prescribes laws, appears to represent a patriarchal stage of human evolution. The Hero, who is frequently as antagonistic to his mother as to his father, who must leave his tribe and find a regal position elsewhere by marrying a chief's daughter, suggests the effects of a matrilineal society. The myth of Orestes, as Bachofen suggested, would then represent a transition between the two stages. Orestes lives in typical heroic fashion with the usual escapes and adventures. Forced to leave home after the murder of his father by his mother and her lover, he returns secretly to kill them. The Furies punish him for the preeminent crime of matricide and drive him into exile a madman. The newer gods how-

ever acquit him and restore him to health. After fulfilling more adventurous tasks, including some divine commands to steal and kill, he returns to take his father's throne and, in his turn, makes his son his heir.

In the investigations of Adalbert Kuhn which Karl Abraham cited (in *Dreams and Myth*), the origins of the Prometheus legend are traced to an illuminating Hindu parallel. The Hindu Pramantha was a god and, at the same time, a piece of wood that was rubbed for making ritual fire. The Hindus regarded the Pramantha as a purely sexual symbol for the phallus while the bored wood base in which it was placed represented the female genitals. The fire which resulted in the ritual was then considered as the son-divinity Agni. The connection with the Prometheus story becomes even clearer when we learn that the root word of Pramantha, *manthani*, means robbing as well as rubbing. Prometheus's benefactions to mankind are also conceived as a theft from the gods and punished as robbery. His benefit to society and his consequent reorganization of society clearly reveal his origin from a father-image. But as a robber, he shows the son-element which feels guilty about his own progress. It is not surprising therefore that a subsequent Hindu ritual should show a similar fusion of father and son-images. Pramantha is there treated as one with his created son Agni.

The Hero or Son-Image, one might say, is a chip off the old block. It is as if one aspect of the father-image or Great Man had detached itself and assumed an independent life by repressing the paternal aspects.

III.

Inside ourselves, he still dwells, the old idol-priest, who broils the best of us for his banquet. Ah, my brothers, how could firstlings fail to be sacrifices!

Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

At this point we must take notice of a contradiction:

- (1) On the one hand, we regard the Hero as a son-image

derived from a father-image, a "chip off the old block," a father-image in a state of partial dissolution. At the same time we deduced that the Great Man represented the more complete father-image. (2) On the other hand, the myths of Heroes and Great Men pointed to the conclusion that the Heroes *preceded* the Great Men,— that Great men are the grand father-images conceived in the milieu of patriarchal societies, while Heroes, the son-images, correspond to the earlier psychology of matriarchal (smatrilineal) societies. In short what we have described as a derivative turns out to be the earlier form in social history.

Needless to say, this contradiction has been constantly pointed to by critics of Freudian psychology in different ways. The problem for us, therefore, is to find out whether the contradiction is in our conception of real life or in the realities themselves. If the trouble is in real life, previous experience indicates that its source will be in the life and imagery of infancy.

First of all, it is well to bear in mind that every imago is charged with some malaise of prenatal life and the anxieties of birth. The primary image that an infant (for our purposes, a baby boy) forms of a whole person is of his mother or the mother's body. After regarding the mother's breast and body as a part of itself to be called on at will for nourishment and pleasure, the child learns that mother is a real, independent person and also learns to hallucinate its maternal comforts. But it also learns to resent the maternal independence, and its resentments and fears of denial are as fantastically exaggerated and violent as its ability to express these resentments are virtually nil. Having committed imaginary cannibalistic mayhem on the giantess, the child reactively imagines equally vigorous and fantastic reprisals. But from learning of the mother as an independent person, the child comes to think of himself as a person.

Powerful as fantasy is, however, ultimately reality is more powerful. The discovery in reality of the Father provides the child with an escape from his oral eat-or-be-

eaten dilemma, but it is escape through another series of fantasies. This period generally coincides with the course of anal preoccupations and training, when the child learns to conserve aggression and, psychologically, instead of being only a receiver becomes a producer as well. These new developments are attended by a sex-confusion. He can produce babies and expel enemies through the anus, as his mother did. His father does all these things too. Not least of all, the child appears now to be producing his own personality centered in the Ego. The father, it is true, is distinguished by a great penis; the child's alas is very small; the mother's imaginary penis was probably put there by father and captured. Above all, the mother is no longer regarded as the sole source of life with the power of inflicting death.

The mother, originally the all-giving Bona Dea, has become the phallic mother-monster. However she is now offset and even dominated by the father who, indeed, also has breasts. From these conflicting and marring imagos does the little boy's Ego Ideal emerge, the image of the self-provider with the penis that attacks and possesses the mother, which can replace her and be as independent of her as she was of him. *This is the father-image*, the image of the introjected parents charged with the aggressive desires and megalomaniac notions of the child himself.

In the next stage, the ambivalent attitude to the father supplements the primal ambivalence to the mother. Once having allied himself with the father, the boy also identifies himself with him. Therefore he replaces him in the mother's bed in fantasy. In fact he is now inclined to rescue the mother from the brutal assaults of the giant. This phase of the full Oedipus complex brings the boy's *first social crisis*.

The boy has now grown sufficiently to be in some contact with the outside world. His fantasy is the more encouraged to engage in this outside world as his family romance becomes hopeless and threatened by tragedy. The penis-less mother (or sister) presents a model of his own future should he persist in direct, if unconscious, rivalry

with his father. The father-image ideal of himself begins to make room for the son-image, an image of a man castrated and expelled for trying to usurp the father's place. This image, backed by infantile megalomania, is the source of the Hero.

So we find that the first *social* fantasy is the fantasy of the Hero which is itself derived from a father-image Ego Ideal. And this social fantasy corresponded ideally to the actual structure of matrilineal societies. The matrilineal ideologies generally referred to a murdered animal ancestor (sex undetermined or varying or combined) and an original goddess-mother. The fictions of such societies have monster-slaying and incest as their basic themes. As time goes on, the ancestor who is murdered is more and more clearly recognized as the father. But the parricidal and incestuous Hero does not replace his father. He must find a home elsewhere in the tribe of his wife.

With the advent of private property and patriarchy (and the consequent abolition of the matrilineal gens), it was natural that the Hero fantasies should also change. The Hero was a (castrated) castaway in search of his (phallic) mother and motherland. In patriarchal life, the earlier father-image was called upon to become the source of the Great Man, the father who was more than a mother. However societies are as unstable as individuals. They are continually breaking down and then reforming their images as the psychic needs for leadership of its members, groups, and states require. Societies, like individuals, have what Goethe called repeated adolescences. If and as men and mankind grow up to genital maturity, such images of both Heroes and Great men will surely fade from memory.

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FOOTNOTES

- (1) *Modern Education*, transl. M. E. Moxon, New York 1932, pages 121-122.

- (2) Edmund Bergler, **The Battle of the Conscience**, Washington, D. C., 1948, p. 3.
- (3) These lines are taken from Andrew Marvell's **Horatian Ode** in honor of Cromwell!
- (4) Theodor Reik, **Ritual**, New York 1946, page 314.

Sydney Dobell's *Roman*: The Poet's Experience and His Work

by

Jerome Thale, Ph.D.

It is difficult to read much about the Victorian era without hearing about the Victorian father. Ladies and gentlemen of other periods had fathers, but not Victorian fathers. Why the father is so awesome a figure in this age it is difficult to say. But we must be aware of the problem to understand the mentality of the age. And we can see the figure repeatedly in its literary products. The fathers in Dickens' novels are a case in point. (1) More spectacular is Samuel Butler's thinly veiled attack on his father in *The Way of All Flesh*. And in biography we have the harrowing account in *Father and Son* of Edmund Gosse's relations with his stern scientist father.

In these last two works the authoritarian father is identified with religious extremism, and the revolt against the father becomes also a revolt against his whole oppressive puritanical world. *The Roman* (1850) by Sydney Dobell (2) is another literary expression of this revolt against the father and his religion — but with the difference that Dobell's attack is unconscious. His upbringing was every bit as harrowing as that of Gosse — indeed I know of nothing in the literature of the nineteenth or any other century to compare with the painful story of Dobell's early years. Dobell did not utter his feelings directly, perhaps he did not even recognize them himself. Nevertheless their intense force unconsciously found expression through certain images and situations which occur consistently in his *Roman*.

To understand the expression of the father-son situation in the poem we must know something of Sydney Dobell's personal background.

Sydney Dobell's grandfather, Samuel Thompson, had founded a church. (3) As a youth, Thompson had rushed "with his native impetuosity into the vices of sensual indulgence." Soon, however, he underwent a conversion, and the "vehemence with which he once pursued vice and folly was now redoubled in his supposed duties." Within a few years, dissatisfied both with the Church of England and the dissenting chapels, he had founded his own Church of God, a curious blend of anti-credal rationalism and moral earnestness. Here he ruled as an authoritarian patriarch; when some of the members expelled him for his dictatorial ways, he immediately founded another, "genuine," Church of God. His family — pious young men had been recruited to marry his daughters and carry on the dynasty — bore his impress. It is described as "happy and well disciplined," and "well disciplined" is explained in his son-in-law John Dobell's statement that "even envy and malice have never attempted to raise any voice against him save that of *religious tyranny* and an indisposition to *see himself wrong*." John Dobell says of the first charge that Thompson ruled for the good of the members and was a leading advocate of equality among them; to the second he replies that having doubts about his own course would be inconsistent for a man who was so conscious that he was doing right. (4) The poet himself was later to speak of his grandfather's "Spartan temper that spared neither nearest nor dearest, if they stood between him and what he believed his mission. . . . [a] stern leader, lopping right and left whatsoever impeded him, . . . and [striking] just as inexorably when it was upon his own right hand." (5)

In nineteenth-century England those who were outside the established Church of England were isolated socially, educationally, and politically. Dobell was cut off from the world around him even more than most dissenters. His father was one of the extreme advocates of Thompson's doctrine of exclusiveness, of keeping away from the "world," those outside the Church of God; he allowed only such contacts as were necessary in his wine business. Under these circum-

stances there were no schools or even tutors fit for Sydney, who was accordingly educated at home. Here he found a father whose "delicate and nervous state of health" and irritability combined with his stringent moral principles to make him something of a Mr. Murdstone.

What made it worse for Sydney, the father had determined on a lofty vocation for his eldest son.

I used to say to him that if one could ever be found again who was spotless and holy, it was with me a pleasing speculation and hope that such a character might, even in this life, be called out as a special instrument of Our Heavenly Father for some great purpose with His Church [i.e., the Church of God]. (6)

Sydney's father regarded him and brought him to regard himself as having a special and almost apostolic mission. Specifically he was to succeed his grandfather as Elder of the Church of God, and under him the world was to be reformed. Speaking of the home training to this end, his biographer notes that "he did not pass through the ordeal unscathed." And although the ordeal of Sydney Dobell was not so dramatic as that of Richard Feverel, its influence seems to have been far more lasting. "His precocity was stimulated, his emotions exercised, his nervous system overstrained." (7)

At four this sensitive child, on being sent to the country, fell into a "passion of crying into which he broke at intervals when he pictured to himself his parents sitting together, and saying 'our poor little boy.' " And his father describes him at this time as "more reserved and increased in morbid sensibility." (8) He was expected to progress intellectually: at six he could make rhymes, at eight he was commenting on Scripture, at ten reading in political economy.

By the time Sydney was twelve or so his father made him a clerk in his business, but the burden of study continued. At fifteen he began memorizing the whole of the New Testament, and a year later was learning by heart large portions of Byron's *Manfred* — a curious and significant combination.

Dobell's early adolescence appears to have been occupied largely with studies and business. His journal during this

period consists of Scriptural and religious thoughts and observations of nature, with an occasional — and welcome — mention of physical exercise. Not long after entering his father's business he was assuming considerable responsibility. It was not a happy time, and the pressure of work and study seem to have been too much for him. He soon became quite ill — of typhus, said the father; of "nervous fever," by the mother's account. She writes in 1838 of the

broken-spirited morbid boy. . . . His father, not understanding the cause of the change, and accustomed to his son's ever-ready help, had become impatient and angry. The oversensitive nature felt this bitterly; but he found himself powerless to alter, utterly unable to do what was required of him — 'to call on some gentlemen on business.' (9)

Finally Sydney had to be sent to the country, where, away from his father and business, he quickly recovered. In spite of the mother's feeling that he should be taken out of his father's business for a time, he was soon back at the wine trade. But thereafter he was allowed annual visits to the country, where he could escape from the "distresses and disgusts of business."

At ten Sydney Dobell had fallen in love with his future wife; at fifteen the serious youth regarded the bond between them "as not for time but for eternity." Nineteenth-century fiction records no courtship so strange as that of Sydney Dobell and Emily Fordham, children of members of the Church of God. His letters to her contain no small talk, no local gossip, no professions of love, only moral exhortations and advice about her reading. He induced her to fall into his habit of "excessive prayer" — for, even to the serious detriment of his health, he took with some literalness the injunction to "pray without ceasing." On his visits to Miss Fordham they read the Scriptures, especially the prophecies indicating the time of Christ's reign on earth. "The more we loved," says his wife, "the more we prayed. . . . His greatest delight was always to interest me in all good and beautiful things, and to rouse me to high views of the highest duties of life" (10) Emily's father often read the cor-

response between the two lovers, and finally complained of "the 'painful and excessive feelings' which . . . [Sydney's letters] betrayed and encouraged." The young Dobell's reply to this remonstrance reveals his state of mind at sixteen.

"The simple command "to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and with all our souls," seems to me to imply an intensity which would require some rather more active state of feeling than that calm and tranquil one which you so pleasingly describe." (11)

There is little to make us think that the period of his engagement — he was married four years later at twenty — did exhibit much calm or tranquility, and there is much to show that it was a time of special strain, of a disturbingly active state of feeling. His journal for the time consists of "religious argument, exhortation, and aspiration." According to his wife, "He looked ill when we first met, . . . and I never knew him long free from some kind of suffering during the years of our engagement." (12) Extra work and anxiety produced numbness in the head followed by obstinate deafness, "doubtless also from unusual irritability," and a painfully acute sensibility to the sufferings of others.

This chronic ill health was no doubt partly physical in its basis, but the strain of "the tyrant business" and the desperate attempt to live up to his personal ideals and the mission to which his father had dedicated him seem to have been largely responsible for his state.

Besides imposing a mission on his son and working him in his business, the elder Dobell contributed to Sydney's unsettlement in another way. To prepare the boy of fifteen for the news that a publisher had rejected his tragedy on Napoleon, he announced one day, " 'Sydney, I have sad news for you. . . . You did not know that Emily was dead.' " (13)

His relations with his fiancée were complicated by his mother's jealousy of the girl. He had held his mother to be " 'the woman of women' as well as 'the mother of mothers,' " and their attachment was "of passionate strength,"

"exceptionally intense and strong." (14) Indeed both his parents had always an anxious concern for his welfare that must have given him little ease. Even a number of years after his marriage we find him writing them conciliating letters explaining why he spends so much money, why he takes cabs, why the study of poetry is not worldly, why he has not taken their advice to reconsider his principles.

And so his troubled life went on until his mid-twenties. He continued for several years his excessive prayer, wrote "passionate verses" to the Church of God, delivered sermons (one lasting two hours) to his brothers and sisters. How all-absorbing his religious life was we learn from an incident of his seventeenth year. He had been brought up to believe that those "aspiring in a special manner to be 'children of God' " should keep aloof from politics, and when he felt disappointment over the outcome of a local election, he wondered whether he should take the defeat of his candidate as a chastisement for having concerned himself in the contest. (15)

Speaking of the years between his engagement at fifteen and his marriage at twenty, Dobell's biographer implies that his succession of illnesses was but a symptom of internal conflict.

It is difficult to give any true notion of the stress and tension of this period of Sydney Dobell's life without touching things almost too sacred for handling; and yet, without some reference to these inner phases of his mind, no indication can be given of one of the causes of the early and disastrous breakdown of his physical system. (16)

John Dobell, writing at the time of his son's marriage in 1844, summed it up thus: " 'Up to this time the purity and holiness of Sydney's character is all I could wish. May he go on to perfection!' " (17)

Marriage seems not to have changed things much for Dobell; although he lived apart from his parents, he continued working for his father and relaxed neither in his dedication to his mission nor in his own aspirations.

Matters came to a head in the summer of 1847. Dobell

was persuaded by worried friends to consult a London doctor, whose advice led to a prolonged holiday, less work, and a move to the country for better air. But more than a change of surroundings was needed to prevent the collapse that soon came — a collapse even more severe than the first one, ten years earlier. His father kept a notebook which minutely detailed the course of the illness — described as rheumatic fever — which nearly proved fatal. After several days there was some improvement; two weeks later the father wrote:

‘The poor dear skeleton as he lies in his bed can talk a little, rationally and intellectually, on moral and reflective subjects, but his memory of locality and individuality is most shocking. He cannot understand where he is, does not remember a quarter of an hour afterwards that he has seen you, but if you utter a wrong sentiment he can correct you, or approve a right one.’ (18)

After seeming improvement there was a relapse, and a second physician had little hope.

During the illness Dobell begged his father not to pray for his recovery. The genteel female novelist who wrote Dobell's life finds this incident hard to accept, but it is not so inconsistent as would appear. To the first challenge of working in his father's business he had responded, at fourteen, with a physical and mental collapse. And the second crisis came when to this cause was added ten years of aspiration, straining, religious anxiety.

Certainly the results of the crisis indicate that it had involved more than physical illness. Following it Dobell sought independence from his father, he gradually relaxed his moral stringency, he began to abandon the family beliefs, and he transferred his aspiration from the Church of God to poetry. As his biographer puts it, the history of his development from this time on is the story of his gradual emancipation from the restrictions of his youth. Within a few years he gave up active participation in the Church; he acquired relative independence of his father; he turned all his energies into the production of his first poem. He himself realized how profound was the change.

'You think [wrote Dobell to his sister, three years after the illness] I am improved lately. As a moral and intellectual whole, perhaps I am. But I shall never cease to look back on the four or five years preceding my illness with a kind of self-reverence — as to an impossible saintdom, to which I would not return, but which I can never equal on this side death. I see that I have a wider mission and a rougher excellence before me; but I cannot look back without a melancholy interest to the years when I never thought a thought or said a word but under the very eyes of God.' (19)

There were two external manifestations of the change that had gone on within Dobell. First, "many reasons combined," as his biographer says with significant vagueness, "to make him . . . desirous of a more independent life than he had yet led."

It is easily conceivable that one of these reasons was the strong craving for more leisure to devote to literary work. He was loved by both his parents with unusual intensity: their admiration of him and expectations from him were very high, and at the same time, very clearly defined; and any substitution of an ideal of his own for that which from his childhood had been held up to him, naturally brought upon him remonstrance, passionate, because the love out of which it sprang was passionate.

The biographer then quotes a "sentence pencilled in one of his early notebooks."

'Habit of obedience necessary to be early formed. Therefore before reason can comprehend the Will of God another will is necessary; but when reason is gained God becomes the Parent, and the parent sinks to brotherhood.'

His desire for independence was partially fulfilled when he was given the management of a branch business, a "concession [that] was greatly valued, as implying comparative independence." (20)

Second, Dobell began the composition of his drama of Italian freedom, a live subject in the 1840s. This work, published two years later under the title of *The Roman*, contains a series of loosely related episodes, in which Vittorio Santo, "a Missionary of Freedom . . . disguised as a Monk"

wanders through Italy preaching its "Unity, the Overthrow of Austrian Domination, and the Restoration of a great Roman Republic." In the first section he comes upon some revellers and tells them that they are dancing upon the grave of his mother; he announces that he has allowed his mother to be pillaged and profaned by strange dark robbers. His explanation is that they are defaming the grave of his mother Italy whom he passionately loved; the robbers are the Austrians. The revellers steal away during his harangue — all but Francesca, who subsequently professes her love for the Monk. The Monk rejects her love, but accepts her services as a missionary of freedom. After an episode in which the Monk tells a band of Milanese insurgents that they are foes of Italy because they fight for their city rather than the nation, we learn that he has been imprisoned by Roderigo, greatest libertine in Milan. Francesca offers herself to Roderigo in return for the Monk's freedom. But as soon as the Monk is released and before Roderigo can claim his price she kills herself. In the next episode of the drama the Monk, coming upon a happy family, is asked to bless the son. His benediction concludes, "Of all Thy playmates, mayst thou be the first to die." He explains the strange blessing by telling with considerable indignation the story of his brother, who was imprisoned and killed by the Austrian tyrants. It would be better for this boy to die now than to grow up to a similar fate. For himself, says the Monk, it was his brother's death which threw him into a crisis of despair out of which came his determination to go about preaching the cause of Rome.

In the next scene the Monk engages in a bards' contest. The only lyric of note for our purpose is about a mother who gives up her illegitimate child to its father, an Austrian baron, and then dies in the snow outside his castle. The next to last scene of the drama takes place in prison where the Monk awaits trial for treason. After a general exhortation he tells his followers, "In my life, long past, There is a passage, friends, which set apart From our rich confidence, I have reserved as burden for this hour." Once in a

summer day in Campagna, says the Monk, I called up visions old and new and found myself a participant in a gladiatorial contest of imperial times. Just as my larger and stronger opponent was about to kill me, a Christian priest rushed into the arena and stopped the contest. The angry crowd erupted and stoned all three of us to death. In the final scene the Monk is tried for treason, and as he is about to be led to death, a mob, headed by a woman (presumably the mother whose child he had blessed) rushes upon the court crying, "Death to the Tyrants."

II

Dobell himself gives us a warrant — if any is needed — for reading *The Roman* in terms of the author's experience, when, about this time, he advises a young novelist to have "something to say."

"Something" peculiarly your own, and something you have learnt in your own heart, soul and life, and which must therefore be given for the instruction of your fellows. . . . I don't mean any principle or didactic lesson, you may have been able to draw from experience, but the actual experience itself. If there is anything wherein it has happened to you to suffer deeply, or to feel acutely, or to perceive vividly, take that phasis of your life, disguise it, by altering place, time and costume, and I think and believe you can write a valuable story. It is not necessary that the events be the same, (indeed it is better they should not, for many reasons), but it is easy to invent circumstances and cases wherein our own experience would be appropriate, and where we may embody it without its being recognized. (21)

Such a revealing comment suggests that *The Roman* is quite consciously an expression of Dobell's problems at the age of twenty-four. It may well be that the operation is fully conscious (although one is inclined to doubt it). But Dobell's advice implies that the selection of autobiographical motifs is a matter of free choice, and that it is merely a convenience to supply the writer with material. However, in his own case the use of autobiographical themes was neither. They were more than a source of material, they in fact supplied the motive power for writing; nor was the choice free,

it was a compulsive one; a profound change had taken place in Dobell; he had to unburden himself but could not do so directly. I would add that the nature of his experiences did not permit him to admit them fully to himself and he had to express them under a series of symbols.

On the simplest level it is clear that rebellion against Austrian tyranny was not "something which he had learned in his own heart, soul and life." Of course the tyranny of the established social and religious order against the Church of God was something he knew first hand, and this is one element in the making of *The Roman*. But more important, Dobell had experienced tyranny — and he did suffer deeply, feel acutely — in the person of his father, who made him work and learn beyond his capacity, who had dedicated him to an eccentric cause, and whose upbringing had left Dobell a wreck at twenty-four. And he longed so much to escape this tyranny that he had married at twenty, that he had pressed his father to grant him independence in his job, and that he had had "nervous breakdowns" at crucial periods.

This general theme appears throughout the poem, but since in particular passages the symbols for it are subtle and shifting, it will be well to list in order of occurrence in the poem the specific aspects of the poem which symbolize Dobell's life. His life shows up in five ways.

1. His attitudes toward his mission — in the mission of the Monk.
2. His relation to his mother — in the Monk's love for mother Italy.
3. His wish and failure to free himself from his father — in the Monk's story of his brother.
4. His feeling that he has been destroyed (or will be) by his father — in the gladiatorial contest.
5. His wish that his father would forgive him (and a rationalization of his conduct) — in the forgiveness of the father at the trial scene.

1

The most obvious relation between the hero of the poem and its author is that both are poets. There is a literary

precedent for this in the Romantic poets, especially Dobell's early idol Byron. The Monk wins a bards' contest for his song on the ideal poet, and his notions of poetry are those of Dobell: the poet is not a mere manufacturer of verses but one of the unacknowledged legislators of mankind; he is a bard, a prophet, a kind of super-being who feels and speaks more intensely than anyone else. He is inspired by God and is a mediator of divine truth. But Dobell's portrait of the bard is for him more than a literary convention; it is in fact closer to the Messianic notions inculcated in him by his family than to the notion of the Romantic poets.

The most notable thing about the Monk is not the fact that he is a poet, but the fact that he is a man with a mission laid upon him, a mission for which he must work with his whole heart and soul, for which he must sacrifice love and even life. Dobell too was a man with a mission, imposed and accepted but not chosen. His training for this overstimulated his talents and gave him an exaggerated sense of his own importance in the scheme of things. But as he matured — and Dobell matured late — he began to grow cool towards the family Church because he came to perceive that its excessive demands on him were warping and twisting his nature. Thus he writes after the breakdown that preceded the writing of *The Roman* of his past years as "an impossible saintdom" and sees before him "a wider mission and a rougher excellence." That is, at the time of writing *The Roman* he has rejected the religious aspirations of the past, but he has by no means given up his sense of a mission — he has merely shifted the object of this mission to poetry. He has given up the projected leadership of the Church of God for a mission less specifically connected with religion and the Church — a good cause, something which even a Church member might consider a mission, but something apart from the Church.

The Monk is an apt symbol for this ambiguous situation, for he is not a Monk but only someone disguised as a Monk. Cutting beneath the surface irony we find that while the Monk is not a real missionary for any Church he is a "mis-

sionary" for the cause of liberty — and therefore can truly be called a missionary. In short Dobell is justifying himself by showing that one can be a missionary full of religious zeal, a prophet for a holy and just cause, by identifying himself with liberty as well as by identifying with the Church of God. Having transferred his zeal from religion to poetry he wishes to say that he is still a dedicated soul, a missionary, and that his cause though changed is still a noble one.

There is obviously a certain irony in the fact that the sense of having a mission, of being dedicated, which had been inculcated by the father should be turned against the father. Or to put it in other words, just as the Monk is a missionary for freedom from the tyranny of the Austrians, Dobell is a missionary for his own freedom from his father. Behind the Monk's attack on Austrian tyranny is Dobell's attack on the tyranny of his father. There were several advantages for Dobell in the use of such a symbol. First of all, the Italian cause was one which was congenial to the family's traditional support of liberty; and thus on the surface, Dobell, far from attacking the father, is but carrying out his ideas. Secondly, the symbol was safe since it was congenial not only to the notions of the family, but to society in general, for English sympathy was strongly on the side of the Italians in their unequal contest with the Austrians. (22) Dobell's symbol is not only safe, it is one in which he has society on his side; and thus by implication society is on his side in his struggle with his father. The choice of such a symbol shows not only Dobell finding a safely rationalized form for presenting his own conflict, but shows also a new social orientation in his choice of objects. And furthermore, a greater maturity. That is, Dobell's original mission to reform the world has been translated into something more realistic, specific, and attainable, in the cause of Italian freedom.

There are other similarities between the Monk and Dobell. The Monk's description of himself as "a grave child . . . [who] had thoughts Of Paradise, when other men have hardly Look'd out of doors on earth" is as telling a picture of the young Dobell as we could find. (23) But more im-

portant than any resemblance of this kind is the similarity in the missions which the Monk and Dobell take upon themselves. Like the Monk, Dobell is aware that the old order is crumbling and that the age needs reconstitution on a new basis. A letter to a clerical friend about this time gives Dobell's scheme for changing the age: half a dozen talented young men must become eminent in various fields; on the basis of this eminence they will convince the world of the validity of Christianity. Later in the letter it becomes apparent that Dobell considers himself as one of the half dozen young men — he fits his own poetry into the program, referring specifically to *Balder*, his second major work (1854), as an argument for the necessity of revelation.

It is Dobell, then, as well as the Monk, who Hamlet-like can say:

My God! it is a fearful thing to stand
Alone, beneath the weight of a great cause
And a propitious time!

. What am I,
That I am tortured to supernal uses? (24)

Whether he viewed himself as priest or bard, Dobell must have felt, like the Monk, this sense of burden, and must have realized that he had to be willing to suffer, to renounce normal human affections (as the Monk rejected Francesca) for the sake of the cause.

Dobell also identifies himself with the child whom the Monk addresses as a future rebel and victim of Austrian tyranny. The Monk comes upon a family enjoying a pleasant evening, and blesses the boy with: "Of all Thy playmates, mayst thou be the first to die." He explains the strange blessing:

In thy bright looks, sweet boy,
Wherein the blush yet sleeps which sights of shame
Shall call there, till the weary veins refuse
Their office, and endurance sends the blood
Back from the blanch'd cheeks to the terrible heart
To heave and madden there — (let tyrants tremble

Who rule pale slaves) — yes, in thy brave proud mien,
Thou baby hero, that art born in vain,
I see why Roman mothers wept for glory
And we for shame. (25)

Like the child, Dobell had a brow of promise. Upon him had been laid a great task which cost him much suffering. Though his special and apostolic mission did not kill him physically, it produced a kind of death from isolation, internal conflict, and anguish. Looking back at his wrecked and twisted youth he might well have felt that death as a child would have been better than the slow dying death from the tyranny of his father and the oppressive weight of his mission. (We recall that during his illness he had asked his father not to pray for his recovery.)

We find then that the Monk represents Dobell in two ways — first, as the child dedicated to the service of his grandfather's Church and martyred, as it were, for the cause; second, as one devoting himself to the cause of freedom. With this in mind we can now examine other symbols, of deeper import, in the poem.

2

In several passages the Monk speaks of Italy as his mother. The metaphor is scarcely unusual; but the perfervid and erotic imagery in which it is presented is. Throughout the poem there is the metaphor of Italy the mother, loving and nourishing her sons. The drama opens with the Monk's condemnation of the revellers for dancing on his mother's grave. The desecration is made worse by the fact that,

I loved her,
Ay, loved her with more passion than the maddest
Lover among ye clasps his one-day wife! (26)

We are reminded that the attachment between Dobell and his own mother was "exceptionally intense and strong," "of passionate strength." So strong indeed that it made his mother jealous of his wife. Indeed throughout his early years Dobell's mother seems to have been especially loving

and protective of this eldest of her eleven children. When his father overworked Sydney and put him under nervous strain, it was his mother who objected and who put the blame for the boy's subsequent breakdown on his father. In this light the extravagant devotion to the mother shown in *The Roman* becomes meaningful.

I say there is a grave,
I say it is my mother's: that I loved her,
Ay, loved her with more passion than the maddest
Lover among ye clasps his one-day wife!
And I steal forth to keep my twilight vigil,
And you come here to dance upon my heart.
You come and — with the world at will for dalliance,
The whole hot world — deny me that small grave
Whose bitter margin these poor knees know better
Than your accustom'd feet the well-worn path
To your best harlot's bower. . . .
You lustful sons of lax-eyed lewdness, do you
Come here to sing above her bones, and mock me? (27)

Significantly there is no mention of a father. What there is is a figure of authority in the form of the cruel Austrian tyrant at whose hands mother Italy has suffered.

Strange dark robbers, with unwonted names,
Abused her! bound her! pillaged her! profaned her!
Bound her clasped hands, and gagg'd the trembling lips
That pray'd for her lost children. (28)

She had been sold,

Sold to slaves whose base
Barbarian passions had been proud to swell
In death a Roman pageant. Every limb
Own'd by some separate savage — each charm lent
To some peculiar lust. (29)

The father-mother-son relation appears again in the next scene, the minstrels' contest. One of the tales is of a mother and her illegitimate child. Unable to care for the boy, she stands in the snow before the castle of her seducer, bidding farewell to the child before she gives him to the unloving baron. Next morning, after the child has been turned over to his father, the mother is found frozen to death. The auto-

eratic and unloving father and the loving but powerless mother suggest Dobell's family situation. It is conceivable that as a child he interpreted his mother's inability to save him from the father as an unwillingness, and now makes the mother's death a piece of poetic justice for her failure.

All of Dobell's attitudes towards the mother, with the exception of the one just discussed, are drawn together into one symbol in the mother of the boy upon whom he lays the curse. When he first sees her he says,

She is a poet,
Or in or out of metre. Rome must have her.
A mother too, 'tis well; then there is one thing
The poet will serve. (30)

Subsequently the Monk converts the mother to the Austrian cause, and it is she who leads the crowds that breaks up his trial.

In this mother Dobell symbolizes and fuses three different aspects of his experience; three goals to which he shifts when he breaks away from his father. Rejecting the father, Dobell turns by way of reaction to the mother. Rejecting the father's religion he turns to poetry. The sense of having a mission, of being dedicated, he could not lose, and his passionate and consuming devotion to religion is now directed towards mother Italy and against the fatherlike Austrians. Hence his need to find in one person the three dominant interests of his new mentality: the mother as reaction to the father; the Italian cause as a rebellion against authoritarianism; and poetry, a rejection and substitute for his father's plans for him as leader of the Church of God.

3

In a more shadowy way Dobell's relations with his father and with the Church of God are behind the Monk's story of his brother. The Monk begins the account by telling of his grief over the death of his brother. "We were twin shoots from one dead stem." The brother was "brave, Gallant and free" whereas the Monk, like Dobell himself, was "the silent slave Of fancies; neither laugh'd, nor fought, nor

play'd, And loved not morn nor eve for very trembling
At their long wandering shades." The brother was active and
the Monk passive; the brother was flushed with conquests
while the Monk was laden with new thoughts. Soon,

Manhood came,
And with it those fierce instincts of strange combat,
That hurtle in the heart when the new powers . . .
Crowd round the throned will. Childhood and youth
May own unwritten law, and kiss the rod
That strikes, but parleys not. But man must be
A subject, not a slave. And manhood stood
Before the shadows that had awed the child,
And bade them answer. And they spoke. My heart
Stood up. A thousand senses ran to arms,
To guard the revelation; but it came not.
Like a mask'd guest, the voice went through my soul,
And wandering there long days and nights, made all
My hours alarums.

.
The voice disturb'd my soul,
Till spectral nights and strange unnatural days
Beckon'd their neighbour, Death. I felt him chill
The sunshine round me. But I only look'd
More fondly for my brother. (31)

The Monk saw his brother as a noble figure, sublime as a god
of old.

I gave him
Nectar for gods. I saw his eyes light up,
And into his heroic hand I put
The weapon of my thoughts. And he smote with it.

But when the brother struck for liberty he was seized by the
Austrians, and he sank "by the yelling weight Of crowds."
"It pleased some small tyrant To see such goodly slaves," so
the brother was forced to become an Austrian soldier. But
he defied the tyrant "and was doom'd, Doom'd to a coward's
death." (32)

There is a marked similarity between the Monk, "the
silent slave of fancies," and Dobell himself; the "stirrings
of manhood" seem to correspond to Dobell's desire to assert
himself and break away from his father and the family re-

ligion. Furthermore, as in the years between Dobell's breakdowns, the outcome of the conflict was that, "The voice disturb'd my soul, Till spectral nights and strange unnatural days Beckon'd their neighbour, Death."

Just as the brother embodied the qualities the Monk did not have, so also he stands as a symbol for the qualities Dobell lacked; in fact, he is the other Dobell, the person Sydney would like to have been — active, successful, assertive, not subject to self-questioning. In these terms the rebellion of the brother — armed with the thoughts of the Monk — becomes a symbol for what Dobell wanted to do but could, or at any rate did, not do; and the brother's death becomes a prediction of what would have happened to Dobell had he tried to rebel, and at the same time a reason why he did not attempt it. The brother's death can also be looked at as a punishment arising from the guilt Dobell felt at the very thought of such an act.

The brother also represents Sydney Dobell in quite a different way, as the youth destined by his father as an instrument for "one of God's great works." And the following lines can be put into John Dobell's mouth.

I gave him

Nectar for gods. I saw his eyes light up,

And into his heroic hand I put

The weapon of my thoughts. And he smote with it.

But Sydney, as we know, refused to accept and wield the weapon which his father put into his hands, and the death that befalls the brother expresses both Dobell's feeling about what would have happened to him if he had and his reason for refusing to become the instrument of his father's thoughts. For the tyrants that slay the Monk's brother are powerful and numerous like the enemies of the Church of God, and we can be fairly certain that one reason Sydney Dobell refused his mission within the Church was that he saw that an overwhelmingly hostile and powerful world would crush him.

The multiple meaning of the symbolism is clarified when we remember that Dobell drew an analogy between the Church-against-the-world and Sydney-against-his-father, and

we shall see the simultaneous operation of these two uses of the same symbols in the vision passage which will be discussed shortly.

First, however, we must examine the remainder of the present episode, for there is yet another close and illuminating parallel between Dobell's experience and that of the Monk. The Monk tells his hearers that after the execution of his brother,

The sunrise

Of that dread day which found me brotherless,
Saw a pale face on a low bed. Despair
Gave life by taking it. That evening's sun
Fell on the empty pallet, and beside it
An arm'd man flush'd to wildness.

Lost, alone,

Every sweet structure of my heart in heaps,
With the one terrible shock; mazed, ignorant
Of all things but the one which cast them forth,
The desolation in my soul cried out,
And rushing to the ruins I fell down,
The darkest ruin of all. I knelt and wept,
And was a child before them, with the madness
Of a man's heart. I fell upon my face.
Strange sleep possess'd me. Through the hot short night,
Across the hotter desert of my brain
My life went past. All seasons new and old,
All hours of day and night, all thoughts, fears, fancies,
Born on this spot, met as in after-death
About me; and of each my tatter'd heart
Begg'd healing and found none.

.....

Then I rose and cursed

All hope, all thought, all knowledge, all belief,
And fell down still believing. With each hour
In my spent soul some lingering faith went out,
Woes that began in fire had burnt to blackness,
The very good within me had grown grim,
The frenzy of my shipwreck'd heart had thrown
Its last crust overboard — then, then, oh God!
Then in the midnight darkness of my passion,
The veil was rent which hid the holy of holies,
And I beheld and worshipp'd.

.....

The sun rose,
 Forth towards me as in awful adoration
 Each ruin stretch'd appealing shades. There came
 Soft lightning on my soul, and by a voice
 Ineffable, and heard not with the ears,
 'ROME.'

.
 Calm, brave, serene,
 Refresh'd as from a sleep of ages, weak
 As a birth-weary mother, but yet strong
 In cast-out sorrows, I stood up and gazed
 With long looks of sweet wonder The fierce craving
 In my lank hungry soul had ceased. The thirst
 That burn'd my heart was quench'd. The mystic yearning
 For something ever near, and ever far,
 That made my life one dream of wasting fever,
 Was over. (33)

If the death of the brother represents the mutilation that Dobell suffered in his strange upbringing, then the despair that "gave life by taking it" and the whole crisis experience centered around it can be related to Dobell's crisis in 1847. In both cases there is a period of stress and doubt, characterized by sickness and even hallucinations, followed by a kind of "center of indifference" and then a dedication to a new cause. And Dobell did begin after his breakdown to reject the Church, his mission, and his father's domination in general, and did dedicate himself to poetry and the cause of liberty.

Many of the phrases in the description of the Monk's crisis, which is described with such striking detail, are suggestive of Dobell's similar experience.

The fierce craving
 In my lank hungry soul had ceased. The thirst
 That burn'd my heart was quench'd. The mystic yearning
 For something ever near, and ever far,
 That made my life one dream of wasting fever,
 Was over.

We recall that from excessive prayer and religious anxiety Dobell's life was literally one of wasting fever; we recall that after his breakdown he felt he had improved as a moral

and intellectual whole and that he looked back to the four or five years preceding it with self-reverence for the "impossible saintdom" to which he had aspired but to which he no longer aspired. Now that he saw he had a rougher and wider mission before him, he could not look back without a melancholy interest to that period in which he had never thought a thought or said a word but under the very eyes of God.

4

The most sensational of those episodes through which Dobell expresses his own experience occurs as an overly long illustration in a speech the Monk makes in prison. The Monk's language introducing this dream or vision indicates its special significance.

In my life, long past,
There is a passage, friends, which set apart
From our rich confidence, I have reserved
As burden for this hour. Ye are just, brethren,
And will believe me that I dig this dust
Of personal remembrance as the sands
Of golden shores. (34)

Once, the Monk's dream goes, I found myself in the Coliseum, a participant in a gladiatorial contest, my foe a Spartacus. It was as though some "poplar giant — tyrant of the plain" fell "foul of some slim cypress." The giant

Striding like a storm,
Uproots me, lightening. See my blade fly up
Like a flung torch; myself into the dust
Hurl'd like a spear; and the Goliath folding
His untask'd arms upon his unbreathed breast,
Look up without a flush for the well-known
Signal of doom. Two hundred thousand hands
Gave it. (35)

While the sword is falling, the victim glances about the Coliseum and sees all those who assent to his death: grey proconsuls; warriors; senators; priests of all orders; bishops; great merchants and statesmen; pale philosophers; poets; women, too. Suddenly there is a cataclysmic scene — de-

scribed in terms of tremendous rushing life, howling vortices, tempests, caged fiends, and a volcanic explosion — in which all are destroyed. And after this a silence. And the vision ends.

But the vision comes back again. We learn that just as the giant was about to kill the Monk, a Christian priest, like Abdiel defying Satan, had broken into the arena and flung down his sword to stop the contest. Here the vision ends, with the crowd bursting forth in anger and slaying priest, victim, and conqueror.

Surely the passage is complex. As the Monk points out, it is a parable for his hearers, showing how they must be like the priest who gave his life in witness to his faith. All the senators, poets, and so forth, who consent to the death of the hero, are all the respectable powers who consent to Austrian domination of Italy and punishment of patriots who fight for her cause. But only a small part of the ten pages of poetry sets forth the situation necessary for drawing this moral. The importance the Monk attaches to this episode leads us to think that the scene must have some deeper meaning for Dobell.

The respectable powers who, on the overt level of the Monk's parable, consent to the hero's death, represent those who consent to Austrian domination of Italy. But for Sydney Dobell they are all the forces of respectability opposed to the hole-in-corner Church of God: bishops are in the list, and the Bishop of London had objected to licensing the Church of God; and perhaps the giant is "the German giant infidelity" that Dobell saw at this period as the great enemy.

In this passage, as elsewhere, Dobell makes the unequal struggle between the Italian people and their Austrian oppressors parallel both the struggle of the Church of God with a hostile and indifferent world and his own struggle with his father. The Spartacus foe — and Spartan is a good word for John Dobell — is Dobell's father, the poplar giant, tyrant of the plain; and the slim cypress is Sydney. For Dobell found himself besieged on the one side by his father and on the other by the forces of society who refused to ac-

cept him as the new prophet. Outmatched both ways, he could do nothing but suffer death, and even the priest could only postpone the moment of his defeat.

It is difficult to give a fully satisfactory interpretation of this ending. Perhaps the priest represents the broader and more tolerant mentality which Dobell was developing in his mid-twenties. Perhaps the death from two sources is simply a symbol for Dobell's "nervous breakdown" at a period when he was faced with a situation that could not be solved but could only be avoided by escape or annihilation. (36)

5

At the end of the poem — and its position seems significant — we have another father-son situation. A landowner, one of those who is forced to testify against the Monk at his court martial, tells the court,

Sirs, I have a son. The son
Of my grey widowhood. To whose dear tune
I have so play'd my life, in the dim future
Of my old heart I own no single hope
That has not all his features. What he was
To me, a daughter seem'd to my rich neighbour,
Worthy Antonio; and wherein my son
Fail'd of perfection's stature, it did show
Complete in her. Antonio and I,
Old schoolfellows — had mark'd them for each other.

Every day the youth wandered to the brook, played his dulcimer, and thought about Antonio's daughter.

Here,
Good Sirs, this traitor met him, and did use —
So I learn now — to sing his witchcraft to him,
Discoursing much of other mistresses,
Freedom and Rome — (the Mussulman): in fine,
My son, beguiled, Sirs, by this sorcerer's spell,
Slighted Antonio's daughter, and is gone
I know not whither. (37)

The parallel to Dobell's courtship of Emily Fordham is striking. Both families, Church members, looked forward approv-

ingly for a long time to the marriage of Emily and Sydney. But the symbolism shifts. Like the landowner's son, Sydney Dobell was one

To whose dear tune
I have so play'd my life, in the dim future
Of my old heart I own no single hope
That has not all his features.

Like the son, Sydney Dobell was to carry on the dynasty of his family. But he too abandoned his father's cause for another, that of poetry and Italy. In these terms the passage that follows is significant. When the judges ask whether the son stole from his father, the old man replies,

My child, Sir, is no felon. He took nothing
But his old lyre. Nay, now you urge my thought,
There was an ancient toga which had hung
With other Roman relics in my hall,
He took that with him. And God bless him with it! (38)

One senses in this both a justification of Sydney Dobell and a pathetic wish that things might have been otherwise, for Dobell is the son who abandoned his father's cause for another, taking only his "lyre." Here he is showing that a parent who is really generous-minded blesses his son for what seems to the narrow-minded Austrian judges a defection. (39)

Had John Dobell been as tolerant and understanding as this father, Sydney Dobell's life would surely have been a happier one. Whether he would have produced a better or a worse poem than *The Roman* we cannot say. In any event, the poem that he did produce is the direct result of his experience and affords us a remarkable insight into one Victorian father and a detailed demonstration of the way his son's conflicts found literary expression.

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NOTES

- (1) See for example Leonard F. Manheim, "The Personal History of David Copperfield: A Study in Psychoanalytic Criticism," *American*

Image, IX, 21-43; and Lionel Trilling, "Little Dorrit," *Kenyon Review*, XV, 577-590.

(2) Sydney Dobell (1824-74), a poet of considerable talent, widely acclaimed in his own time and important in the development of Victorian poetry.

(3) Thompson's Church of God died out in the nineteenth century and is not connected to present Churches of God.

(4) John Dobell, "Samuel Thompson, Esq.," *The Christian Reformer*, V, No. xlix, Jan., 1838, 67-72.

(5) *Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell*, ed. E[mily] J[olly], 2 vols., London, 1878, I, 247-48. This official biography will henceforth be referred to as *L&L*.

(6), (7), (8), and (9) *L&L*, I, 6; 5; 8; and 25.

(10), (11), (12), and (13) *L&L*, I, 51, 34; 40; 54; and 45.

(14), (15), (16), and (17) *L&L*, I, 33 and 208, II, 283; I, 58; 52; 83.

(18), (19), (20), and (21) *L&L*, I, 93-94; 113; 97-98; and 291-92.

(22) In Byron's poetry, for example, rebellion is directed against socially approved institutions and customs, and hence the Victorian reading public could enjoy this emotion only guiltily. But when the object of rebellion is foreign tyranny, liberty-loving Englishmen could participate in the emotion more readily and freely. One is led to wonder, therefore, if this is not behind much of nineteenth-century liberalism with its insistence on liberty and attacks on authoritarianism, both at home and abroad. That is, both for the poets, politicians, pamphleteers, and so forth, and for the readers, the cause of liberty and rebellion against tyranny is a "safe" outlet for emotions that have otherwise no socially acceptable outlet.

(23) *The Roman*, 5-6, Vol. I of *The Poetical Works of Sydney Dobell*, ed. John Nichol, 2 vols., London, 1875. It seems more than coincidence that his biographer, who had lived with the family, should quote these very lines to describe his youth ("In Memoriam—SD," *Good Words*, XV (1874), 718-20).

(24), (25), (26), and (27) *Roman*, 19-20; 82; 4; and 4-5.

(28), (29), (30), and (31) *Roman*, 6; 14; 74; and 88-89.

(32), (33), (34), and (35) *Roman*, 90, 92, 93, 94; 105-108; 157; and 162.

(36) Perhaps there is some connection here with his desire to die at the time of his second collapse.

(37) and (38) *Roman*, 175-77; and 177.

(39) Dobell's subsequent history bears out this interpretation of *The Roman*, for *Balder* (1854) deals not with a patriot-zealot but a poet-zealot, whose megalomania leads him to murder his child and later his wife in order to further the production of his great epic. Having changed his object from religion to poetry, Dobell seems to have realized that he must still rid himself of the egotistic sense of his mission — a sense instilled in him from his earliest years. Having

exorcised his personal problems in these two poems, Dobell wrote little more — partly because of illness, partly from lack of favorable critical reception, and perhaps mostly from the lack of compulsion to write.

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